

Widening Access to Education as Social Justice

Essays in Honor of Michael Omolewa

Edited by

Akpovire Oduaran and Harbans S. Bhola



United Nations
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Cultural Organization



UNESCO Institute for Education



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AS SOCIAL JUSTICE

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AKPOVIRE ODUARAN and H.S. BHOLA

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FOREWORD

Overcoming oppression and exclusion through measures of equity, resolving conflict without violence, and establishing the conditions for mutual recognition of our individuality and cultural diversity are fundamental ambitions of justice everywhere. The ultimate goal is the promotion of human dignity and freedom, social harmony, and respect for the environment.

To the extent that genuine empowerment, reconciliation, and tolerance rely on knowledge for making informed decisions and taking appropriate action, justice is an affair of education. Only through insight into the nature and causes of discrimination, strife, and prejudice can wrongs be overcome and the moral and legal structures necessary for fairness and right conduct be successfully developed. In this perspective, education is a primary means for achieving social justice and harmonious living. Indeed, one of the moving forces of the current decade, building on the great democratic and civil rights struggles of the preceding century, is the power of education to construct peace in the minds of men, women, and children. Education does this not merely through the learning of universally shared values and the basic principles of justice but also through everyday practice in classrooms, schools, colleges, and, indeed, all learning environments. The values of justice and fairness are not abstract but are concrete and immediate. Even with modest levels of resources at our disposal, much can be done.

The conviction guiding the present volume—*Widening Access to Education as Social Justice: Essays in Honor of Michael Omolewa*—is that increasing the availability of educational opportunities and ensuring the ability to take advantage of them is a fundamental component of any equitable community. Like the demand for justice itself, the demand for education is not a good that can be denied too long once it has entered people's minds. It is an old adage that bestowing knowledge, like lighting one lamp from another, does not deplete its source but augments it. Lighting the lamp of education is a common duty of free human society.

Access to education preserves and promotes the cultural heritage of humankind by sustaining and developing cultural diversity and human creativity, for instance, by incorporating indigenous forms of knowledge, employing mother-tongue instruction, and taking account of local needs in education systems, whether formal, nonformal, or informal in character. Likewise, globalization, if it is to have a human face, must reflect the many facets of cultural diversity so that mutual respect and solidarity may be nurtured.

It has long been UNESCO's role to promote and facilitate dialogue among Member States with a view to constructing an agenda of global peace and justice based on democratic ideals and sustained by consensus. UNESCO's commitment to social justice is reflected in its subscription to the principles, goals, and targets of the Millennium Declaration. Effective access to basic education of good quality is central to combating poverty, hunger, and disease and working for gender equity, maternal health, and environmental sustainability. Education for All (EFA), in which UNESCO is playing a leading role, is grounded upon a vision of global equity in which the learning needs of all children, youth, and adults, male and female, are met. Education is a good in itself but also a means for achieving other goods.

By making the availability of educational opportunities and the ability to take advantage of them central to the concerns of social justice, the present volume aptly pays tribute to the work of Michael Omolewa, President of the 32nd UNESCO General Conference and Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO. Professor Omolewa has had a distinguished career as a scholar, civil servant, and diplomat, working academically in the field of adult education for his native Nigeria and the African region, as well as on the international stage. His work attests to the fact that lifelong learning in all modes of education contributes substantially to empowerment, reconciliation, and tolerance and in this way fosters social justice. Literacy in particular, as he has repeatedly shown us, should not be construed merely as a tool for reading and writing, but represents a skill for both economic and social advancement. It is a means for unfolding one's personality and improving one's livelihood. It is the responsibility of a truly just society to open up as many routes of access to education as possible. As Michael Omolewa knows, education is an enduring asset that grows in value the more it is used.

Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General, UNESCO

PREFACE

Education as a human right was enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, a document that can rightfully be characterized as the Magna Carta of our times. In today's world of knowledge-driven societies, the need to expand access to education goes beyond mere idealism. Education has become a necessary practical tool for ensuring economic well-being, political participation, and social justice for all nations and peoples. Expanding access to education has become an important component of social justice.

Over the years many nations have come to acknowledge that widening access to education is an irreducible minimum for individual, community, and national development. To date, UNESCO remains the most visible and internationally acknowledged global agency in this regard. It continues to play a leading role through advocacy programs that bring together member states to affirm the goal of widening access to education. In recent times, UNESCO has become more ardent in getting member states to endorse policies and actions aimed at widening such access. The 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, sensitized Ministers of Education to global shortcomings in widening access and succeeded in revitalizing all the national representatives in attendance. The conference itself concluded by asking every member state to embrace the initiative of EFA and to commit resources for implementing it on a national scale.

The emphasis placed on the principles of "Education for All" is a reminder that when nations restrict access to education, they are equally reinforcing social injustice, the common corollaries of which include inequality, marginalization, pauperization in most cases, and several other unintended outcomes. While problems of access to education still persist in developed countries and have been considerably aggravated by immigration, the problem is truly immense in developing countries. In both developed and developing countries, policy-makers and practitioners, researchers and scholars, have often shown great dedication in reflecting and acting on these issues. However, for reasons that are easy to surmise, voices from the South have not often been heard at the international level.

Nevertheless, by a happy historical chance, one Southern scholar, whose whole life has been one of intense advocacy of widening access to education, entered the limelight when he was elected President of the UNESCO General Conference on September 29, 2003, in Paris, France. That scholar is Professor Michael Abiola Omolewa, who has also been Nigeria's Permanent Delegate to UNESCO since 1999. Upon his election, the Community and Adult Education Research Society of Nigeria (CARESON)

discussed the import of that international recognition and decided that Professor Omolewa should be honored with an international, research-based publication on widening access to education. CARESON committed resources to the achievement of that goal. When its resources were spent, however, it turned to several people and organizations for assistance. The necessary funding was provided by UNESCO and a friendly family, for which we are deeply grateful.

Previously, there was not a single book that attempted to bring together truly global perspectives on the widening of access. This volume aims to fill that gap. It presents reflections on international initiatives for expanding access to education, as well as on the achievements, failures, contradictions, and challenges that have accompanied these efforts.

The book is arranged in five parts. Part I joins biography with history by providing a sketch of the life and work of the man honored here and also offers discussions of foundational issues related to the widening of access to education. Part II presents overviews of potential ways of expanding access through institutional partnerships and new technologies, while also capturing the dark shadows cast by poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the future of access to education. Part III presents specific case studies in national contexts, as well as cases related to particular geographical regions or sectors of education. Part IV addresses issues of present research, particularly the contexts in, and conditions under, which it is carried out. And Part V considers the future prospects of widening access to education.

The experiences described in this book are challenging, insightful, and thought-provoking. The chapters are rich in lessons from which educational planners and policy-makers, politicians, scholars, students, and the general reader are certain to profit. This volume, taken as a whole, should provide a welcome companion to all who desire a global picture of widening access to education as social justice.

Of equal importance to the contributions of CARESON and UNESCO in the production of this volume was the readiness of several eminent scholars to serve as editorial advisors and reviewers or authors. Many of these scholars rendered invaluable services ensuring the quality of writing and thought in the present volume. Most of the editorial advisors have had to read several drafts of the manuscripts. Some read more than four chapters, and we realize how difficult that was given the fact that many of them were quite busy already. We are deeply indebted to these scholars for the services they have rendered. While space will not permit us to detail the help rendered by each and everyone of them, we cannot go without drawing special attention to the contributions of Professors Burtch, Dibie, Fasokun, Onokerhoraye, Osborne, Osuala, Preece, and Storan, each of whom willingly took on extra assignments on very short notice. It is extremely

encouraging to know that there are so many eminent scholars in the North and the South who are ready to work together in the spirit of global unity and support for the development of scholarship in the area of widening access.

The chapters have been written by eminent scholars carefully selected from all regions of the world. We are certain that readers will find much food for thought in these pages; we are confident that this book will long be a valuable compendium for all who are interested in the global initiative to promote social inclusionism and the widening of access to education.

That the production of this book has been achieved within the specified schedule is also the work of several individuals whose involvement in the project has ensured the speedy completion of its various aspects. We are especially grateful for the help of the UNESCO Institute for Education in supporting the production of this work. We also wish to thank wholeheartedly the Director-General of UNESCO, His Excellency, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, whose words of encouragement motivated us to pursue this project to its logical conclusion. That he agreed to write the Foreword to this book is itself testimony to his enthusiasm and commitment to the promotion of access to education and the eradication of illiteracy from this world. We are immensely grateful to him and all staff at UNESCO who wrote to encourage us in this initiative. Finally, we are very appreciative of the generous cooperation of the authors, who completed their manuscripts in accordance with our specifications and by the deadline for submission without complaint.

To all who have contributed their knowledge and talents to the completion of this project we express our heartfelt thanks.

Akpovire Oduaran and H.S. Bhola

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PART I

FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES

Chapter 1

MICHAEL OMOLEWA'S ADVOCACY OF WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Gbolagade Adekanmbi, Rashid Aderinoye, and Abidoye Sarumi

1. INTRODUCTION

For us the thought of writing on Michael Omolewa's advocacy of the widening of access to education is thrilling, and for obvious reasons. First, his notion of education has always revolved around a conception that goes beyond the much discussed proposals concerning lifelong learning. His position on this seems to stem from the final passage rites in Yoruba culture, where the dead person is told: *Majokunrun majekolo, ohun ti won ba nje lajule orun ni ki o maa ba won je* (meaning: The dead [person] is advised not to eat worms or millipedes, but only whatever people eat in the life beyond). The Yorubas believe strongly that there is a life beyond the present one for every dead person. Second, over the years Michael Omolewa's theoretical and practical contributions to adult education and its component fields have focused on the possibility of everyone's gaining access to some sort of "schooling." Third, his sometimes unconventional approach to planning, implementing, and evaluating various forms of educational interventions, which for many has been a starting point for discussions about his achievements, is worthy of being documented and replicated. Fourth, borne by his linguistic abilities, Michael Omolewa's initiatives within national and across international borders draw on strategies that can be applied elsewhere. Fifth, his impact on the lives of ordinary people, on whose behalf he consistently champions life-oriented mass education initiatives, is reflected in numerous anecdotes, which should be passed on to future generations.

Michael Abiola Omolewa was born in Ipoti Ekiti, in the former Western region of Nigeria. He grew up at a time when Nigerians were starting to agitate for "improved facilities for higher education and opportunities for employment in the colonial service" and subsequently for decolonization and independence (Ade-Ajayi, 2002). He later attended Ibadan Grammar School, and Ekiti Parapo College and Christ School,

Ado Ekiti, for his secondary education. He obtained distinctions in the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examinations and the London University General Certificate of Education A-Level Examination. It was during this period that Nigeria gained its independence from Great Britain and became a republic. In 1955 the country also witnessed Chief Obafemi Awolowo's introduction of free primary education in what was still the country's Western region and produced some of its first graduates during the same period. Omolewa's attraction to history and historiography developed early, while he was attending Nigeria's premier University of Ibadan and studying African history from 1964 to 1967, and later European history. Striving for excellence, he obtained the best final grade in the Department of History, and won both the departmental prize and the Faculty of Arts Sir James Robertson Prize. By 1973 he had obtained his Ph.D. in the history of administration. During his university studies he was an exchange scholar at the Queen Mary College of the University of London. He also spent time at the Institute of Historical Studies in London, where he sharpened his skills in historiography and historical research. He became quickly attracted to applying his keen interest in historiography to the field of education, and then specifically adult education, at a time when few scholars attempted to document historical events in the disciplines. His entry into the historiography of education and adult education was particularly fruitful in that it provided him with insights into scholarship and educational access. For brief periods between 1965 and 1968 he attended a range of language proficiency courses in French and German, in Dakar, Lyon, and at the Goethe Institute in Munich. These various experiences and achievements, as well as his own humble beginnings, were later to play a major role in shaping his thoughts, propelling his ideas, and invigorating his push for widening access in educational provision.

It should be noted that Michael Omolewa was the first African graduate of History to become a Professor of Adult Education, and he was the first recipient of the Roby Kidd Special Citation for distinguished service in adult education. In addition to being the first Nigerian professor to serve as Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, he was the first West African to be elected President of the General Conference of UNESCO.

Against this backdrop, our aim in what follows is to examine Michael Omolewa's role in widening access to education. To give a clear picture of the man and his achievements, we have made use as much as possible of eyewitness accounts, investigations, and other historical records. Likewise, we attempt to provide eyewitness accounts of some of Omolewa's advocacy roles. Reflection on what he has written, said, and done will also enable us to present these roles more systematically to the reader. We shall comment on his views on issues relating to access in education and adult education.

We shall also highlight the major initiatives of which he has been a part, in Nigeria and internationally, and comment on his strategies, including the use of partnership building and clientele participation. We shall direct the reader's attention to specific ideas that hold great promise for replication in other climes and contexts even as we comment on the context from which his ideas grew. And, finally, we shall appraise some of his major ideas as reflected in a number of books and primers he has written personally or in collaboration with others.

2. ON THE ISSUES OF ACCESS AND ADVOCACY

The terms “access,” “inclusive,” and “open learning” (UNESCO 2003) have always been used interchangeably. Among those who have been excluded from needed educational intervention are children living in difficult circumstances, children from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, members of ethnic minorities, girls, children from remote areas, and people with special educational needs. Still others have been excluded on grounds of geographical separation or legal confinement or because they dropped out of the formal school system and later became out-of-school youth and adults. They also include adults who could not read, write, calculate, and acquire global knowledge, as well as those who could not improve their professional skills on the job. One major reason why they are often shut out of the formal system is that the formal system is restrictive. It is exclusive because classroom space is usually limited, teacher–pupil ratios are predetermined, and the age requirements make it impossible for children below or above the required age to gain entry; thus various children and adults miss out on participating in the formal system. Other factors responsible for exclusion include a lack of political will on the part of government, inappropriate curricula, lack of access by teachers, inappropriate training, inadequate educational infrastructure, parents' low level or lack of literacy, the use of corporal punishment, and the pronouncement of failure—where this latter factor usually marks the end of the dream of a rich and productive career for many a learner. Access provision would thus be facilitated if these factors were removed or appropriately addressed. Since the issues of access, participation, and social justice are addressed in other chapters in the present volume, we shall now focus on the issue of advocacy.

“Advocacy” simply means advancement of a course, interest, or ideology. With its conceptual roots possibly in the United States, it is a method of convincing two parties: for the one, to accept, fund, and introduce a program for the good of the community; for the other, to be receptive to that program. In the past, advocacy was seen as an activity aimed at the recipient of social reform. Advocacy also has legal connotations, such as in making a case for someone in a court of law. Most individuals or organizations engaged in one

form of advocacy or the other may be so involved for ensuring parity, equality of access, and generally making a voice heard in what Paolo Freire has termed a “culture of silence” (Freire, 1970). It is generally agreed that governments, more often than not, tend to initiate social reforms only after human rights groups, civil societies, or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have put pressure on them. It is only then that governments agree to establish policy frameworks in support of much needed reforms. During this presentation, the reader will see just how often and the ways in which Omolewa has played the role of advocate within the educational community. One such medium is the EFA initiative in whose context Omolewa’s gradual but progressive advocacy work for access to education has been systematically translated into action. His desire to widen access illustrates Gelpi’s position (1979) that work and education are holistic, inseparable activities.

2.1 An access problem in context

Most countries are fond of setting beautifully framed goals and objectives; yet translating such goals into action can often be problematic, and in some cases they even prove to be a mirage. Let us comment briefly on the context that has served as a springboard for Omolewa’s advocacy roles.

Like other countries, Nigeria is guided by specific national objectives. Specifically, it desires to be:

- a free and democratic society,
- a just and egalitarian society,
- a united, strong, and self-reliant nation,
- a strong and dynamic economy, and
- a land of bright and full opportunities for all its citizens.

With these objectives Nigeria’s philosophy of education has been to integrate individuals into a sound and effective citizenry with equal educational opportunities for all at all levels. In light of this philosophy, Nigeria’s policy on education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981) comprised the following aims:

- the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity,
- the inculcation of the necessary values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society,
- the promotion of and training for a deeper understanding of the surrounding world, and
- the promotion of the individual’s acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities, and competencies (both mental and physical) as tools for living well in and contributing to the development of Nigerian society.

Although the objective of accelerating the planning and implementation of improving access to education had been formulated already in the 1970s,

it was only in 1977 that the National Policy on Education (NPE) was launched and then reviewed in 1981; in accordance with it, all educational policy documents in Nigeria assert the country's commitment to ensuring that free and compulsory education, which is of satisfactory quality, is provided to all children up to the age of 14. Nevertheless, available statistics suggests that a large number of children continue to fall outside the ambit of primary education. It has also been found that while some states have made much progress towards achieving the goal of universal primary education, others have lagged behind. Specifically, while the number of primary schools has risen from 15,703 in 1960 to 40,055 in 1996—an increase of 255% over a period of 36 years—and enrollment figures have increased correspondingly from 2,912,618 in 1960 to 14,078,473 in 1996 (UNESCO, 2001), the adult literacy rate has remained at 57% since 1999, leaving about 60 million Nigerians illiterate. Access to basic education thus continues to elude millions of children, adults, and out-of-school youths. In addition, government has yet to make sufficient efforts to widen access to education. The recent unpleasant revelation by UNICEF studies, which estimates literacy rate in Nigeria to be 55% as a result of increases in population, further highlights this problem. The studies found that the adult literacy rate, among the population aged 15–24 years, was 71.2% at the national level, with Imo State having the highest rate of about 98% and Yobe State, the lowest rate of 23.4%. Kebbi and Sokoto were found to have literacy rates of 28.6% and 28.9%, respectively.

The scenario just sketched has served as the context and rationale for Omolewa's advocacy activities. For him the access problems could not be wished away or solved by a wait-and-see attitude. In spite of the fact that individuals and/or groups would have to take the bull by the horns, he identified gaps in literacy and other educational provisions, started making proposals, initiated projects, and set up partnerships to address the problems. The following sections highlight various aspects of his involvement.

3. MICHAEL OMOLEWA'S INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES

In pursuance of his advocacy of educational access, Omolewa's thoughts and actions have aimed at establishing relevant structures, identifying and evolving proposals and innovative strategies, and initiating an integrated intervention in the lives of rural citizens. His return to tradition through the application of various aspects of the indigenous African educational system has been quite significant.

Omolewa's unconventional approach to tackling issues has also been striking. For the greater part of his career, he has regarded success in widening

access to education as hinging on a participatory approach. He has sought to engage all parties involved in the educational and developmental planning process. These include governments and agencies responsible for the planning and implementation of education, and also civil society. Of particular importance is the priority he has given to strengthening and improving the existing educational system, including its policies and structures. He has effectively used the professional forum of education and adult education to drive home his message while making significant progress on most issues of access. Likewise, he has pursued the gender discourse from a different angle, greatly emphasizing the need to educate girls and to focus on them in many existing programs. His involvement in UNICEF and UNDP programs has provided him with means of addressing this issue. To increase the efficacy of his attempts to reform policy and promote innovative methods and strategies, he has made extensive use of the language of his audience. He has given convincing reasons for developing the capacity of leaders so as to ultimately transform the communities they lead. He has stressed a more integrated approach to the promotion of literacy and developmental discourse, pointing to the holistic nature of the traditional African educational system in support of his chief arguments. At the same time, he has been just as concerned not to lose sight of the contributions made by international agencies and the private sector.

One major factor that has assisted Omolewa in fostering and advancing his philosophy of inclusive education is his recognition and acceptance of the principles of partnership. Having realized that reliance solely on governments and other national institutions has resulted in only limited success, he has reached out to numerous international organizations in the North and the South. The International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) has played a major international role in this regard. Omolewa has won the support of such organizations with specific, measurable, and achievable proposals for clearly determinate periods of time and thereby made strides towards further opening the door of education to Nigerians and others, particularly the marginalized (Omolewa et al., 2000). In doing so, he has ensured that the underlying principles derived from national and educational objectives as spelled out in the National Policy on Education, as well as in the offshoots of international declarations, conventions, and treaties to which Nigeria is a party are adhered to. Similarly, he has identified national and state structures by which to realize his dream. Such national structures have included the Federal and State Ministries of Education, other federal institutions, and state agencies for adult and mass education. They have also included research institutions such as universities and colleges.

Regarding international agencies, he has been involved with numerous organizations, including IFESH, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, the British Council, LAUBACH (now Pro-literacy International), and Education and

Development. It was the mechanism of partnership and links, which informed his founding of the University Village Association (UNIVA)—a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and nongovernmental organization—as a driving force in the promotion of development. To operationalize the mission and vision of UNIVA, he identified and networked with experts in his areas of focus, including functional literacy, community development, life improvement programs, health, democracy, and governance. Occasionally, he has employed the strategies of policy dialogue in developing programs aimed at providing the unreached with access to education. He has influenced the form and content of policy statements drawn up in seminars and workshops, as well as at conferences—particularly those involving colleagues, intellectual peers, and interested stakeholders. In this connection his work with the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE) and with the Deans of Education of Nigerian Universities is significant.

In addressing the challenges posed by unfulfilled government policies, programs, and aspirations, Omolewa has often felt compelled to adopt an underdog approach to reaching the underserved. Given his view that literacy is a key aspect of freedom, a statement of one of his friends, Archer (2003), is revealing:

In all of the different situations in which people need to deal with those who have power, literacy is only a part of a larger equation. Those unable to read are likely to be more intimidated in these situations but their powerlessness is not just about the lack of a technical skill; it is clearly linked to social status, confidence and self-esteem, and the power dynamics are bound up with a wide range of other forms of communication.

Omolewa has tapped the power of information so as to counteract the lethargy of his colleagues, thus paving the way to greater openness. In 1986, as the Chairperson of Committee of Deans of Faculties of Education of Nigerian Universities, he used the occasion of the meeting at the University of Ilorin to solicit support for his colleagues. His aim thereby was to short-circuit an emerging negative government policy towards serving teachers who had embarked on educational programs on their own time in the interest of self-enrichment. Some states at the time were relieving such teachers of their jobs in an attempt to discourage them from seeking to augment their skills. Omolewa called on governments at the federal and state levels to allow serving teachers to use their own time for self-improvement through part-time programs, study leaves, and leaves of absence. He argued that denying them such educational avenues would be counterproductive and added that teachers undertaking self-improvement programs on their own time should be commended rather than have their appointment terminated. He called on the government to encourage

“education for many.” In this way he successfully negotiated strategies for improved teacher performance and university curriculum review (Omolewa et al., 1994).

He has also brought innovations into the teaching and learning process. In numerous presentations at seminars, public lectures, and workshops, he has argued for putting an end to the use of derogatory, oppressive, and exclusive practices in learning situations. For instance, he has encouraged the use of the expression “early leaver” instead of “dropout.” His support of female learners has also been evident, for instance, in his efforts to encourage them to participate more fully in adult literacy. Furthermore, he has introduced the use of another grading strategy. Rather than classifying people as having passed or failed, adult learners were to receive a grade of either “A” or “B” after their examinations. Candidates with an “A” are qualified to proceed to the postliteracy class, while candidates with a “B” will have to work harder until they earn an “A.” Thus the idea of failure, which is common within the formal educational system, has no place in his literacy lexicon.

Another major stride was his introduction of innovative approaches that encouraged more people and communities to participate in learning programs. His advocacy of the use of Real Literacy Materials (RLMs) or words generated by learners has had great impact. Rather than rely on traditional primers, learners are now able to make use of existing written or printed material within their immediate environments. Words or sentences found on billboards, posters, coins or currency notes, and those words usually written on community buildings and walls, become the adult learners’ primers. This has gradually reduced the cost of literacy skills acquisition while increasing the speed at which learners master those skills.

As a pioneer in the field of open learning for both basic and higher education, he experimented with a literacy shop as a way of drawing adult learners back to school. This he did by opening a literacy shop at a popular market in Ibadan, Oyo State. At the shop buyers and sellers were made to realize the importance of reading, writing, and calculation, even when their principal purpose in coming to the market was either to buy or to sell. Illiterate buyers and sellers were made aware of the need either to go back to school themselves or to find a literate person to assist them to learn to read, write, and keep records of their sales. This was an innovative way of opening access to basic education for adults and out-of-school youth. As noted above, on many occasions Omolewa served as catalyst in changing the thinking of colleagues on conceptual matters in the field. His influence was brought to bear in discussions of open learning and the promotion of educational opportunities for the marginalized, nomads, migrant fisherman, and pastoralists.

In his various articles and other contributions to learned journals and books, Omolewa (1976, 1978, 1982) has suggested ways by which Nigerians

could improve their performance on the Oxford, Cambridge, and London University examinations. He maintained that Nigerians could improve their performance through hard work and dedication, but it was also necessary that they have an adequate learning environment and the involvement of parents and the wider community in their education. For him, to widen access in such a way that education has the requisite relevance, quality, and impact, it has been imperative that education be a community enterprise in which everyone is involved.

Having realized that the quality of education depends on the quality of its facilitators, Omolewa has placed a high premium on capacity building. He has struggled not only for quantity but also for quality by advocating constant training programs for teachers, adult literacy facilitators, education managers, community leaders, and the leadership of NGOs, all of whom are crucial to the effective implementation of nonformal educational programs. While many tertiary institutions later went on to establish distance education programs, the National Open University has also been born. As an active participant in its founding, Omolewa strongly advocated EFA.

3.1 Impact on adult education

Omolewa was instrumental in the launching of the NNCAE in 1971. At the launching, the Council made a strong case for the advancement of an all-encompassing educational process in which educational opportunity would be given to children, adults, and practicing teachers. Resolution 6 of the Council, passed and adopted on the same date, states in Section (iii) that the Federal Government shall establish a National Non-Profit Correspondence Institution under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Education. This was to provide correspondence education at primary and secondary school levels. The Federal Government was also to establish, by correspondence, part-time degree studies in one or two federal universities. As an advocate of mass education, Omolewa went further in 1981 when he published a review of most of the results of the conference in his book, *Adult Education Practice in Nigeria* (Omolewa, 1981).

With his colleagues in the NNCAE he helped to mobilize stakeholders in education and succeeded in October 1978 in convening a National Conference of Heads of Adult Education. These were heads from State Ministries of Education and the universities. During the session, a critical review of the NPE was conducted. The conference participants later came up with 31 recommendations, all aimed at strengthening the educational system. They were also designed to alter the system so that it would cater to all, most especially adult illiterates. Some of the recommendations were:

- Local government councils should handle matters relating to the maintenance of adult education classes, centers, day-to-day administration of these centers, and regular payment of instructors' salaries.

- There should be a separate section for adult and nonformal education at the Federal Ministry of Education, as well as an Adult Education Division in each State Ministry of Education as were already in place in some northern states.
- The National Commission for Adult Education, for which provision is made in the NPE, should be set up without further delay and with its specified functions.
- State commissions for adult education should likewise have functions ranging from coordination and working with the National Commission to providing advisory support and collaborating with other bodies to foster the development of adult education.
- A division of nonformal education should be established in Federal and State Ministries of Education.
- Agencies of adult and mass education should be established at state levels with structures in local governments.
- A National Mass Education Commission should be established.
- Institutions of adult and nonformal education should be strengthened in the country.

Other recommendations emphasized adequate financing, institution building, and training of education personnel. These and others are part of what Omolewa resolutely fought for as university professor, President of the NNCAE, and editor of its journal, *Adult Education in Nigeria*. The fact that most of the changes he advocated are now realities shows that Omolewa's labor was not in vain. Of the changes that have not been implemented, they are certainly receiving attention in Nigeria, but also internationally.

As Vice Chairman of the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (AALAE) from 1987 to 1989, he carried out the urgent review of needs for training, especially for emerging Southern African countries, at seminars in Maseru and Harare. In this capacity, he also organized a course in spoken English for participants from French-speaking African countries that took them to various parts of Nigeria, especially the East.

Omolewa was Head of Adult Education at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria from August 1987 to July 1990, during which time the department, among other firsts, won the coveted 1989 International Reading Association (IRA) Literacy Prize. The award was presented by the then UNESCO Director-General, Federico Mayor, in Paris on September 8, 1989. In the words of the IRA, the Department of Adult Education was "recognized for its work in promoting literacy, functional literacy, and continuing education in Nigeria. Its special training programs have benefited nearly 1,500 students who have become adult educators and education extension workers in rural areas of the country" (Du Bois, 1989). Omolewa's desire for flexibility of access has led to the creation of educational

opportunities for many learners. For example, during his tenure as Head of Adult Education, he proposed and succeeded in widening the scope of activities of the Extramural Studies program, which led to the establishment of centers in additional areas of Ibadan.

As consultant to the USAID/CEPA Program from 1997 to 1999, Omolewa promoted civic education, democracy, and governance. With the UNDP he has engaged in grassroots training and community education. With UNICEF he has worked actively in promoting education for girls, youth, and women who are working in especially difficult circumstances.

In promoting greater access, Omolewa has served as an examiner at all levels of the educational system. He was an examiner for the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) from 1985 to 1988. He later served as the Chairman of the Internationalization of the History Curriculum panel of WAEC from 1992 to 1999. He has also been an external examiner for undergraduate and graduate programs and for the examination of doctoral theses at the Universities of Botswana, Nigeria, Jos, Lagos, Ilorin, Benin, and Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), among others. Omolewa's advocacy of multiple examining bodies, which is captured succinctly in his inaugural lecture at the University of Ibadan, has not gone unheeded. It is encouraging to note that the Nigerian Examinations Council (NECO) has since been established alongside the WAEC. NECO's mandate to conduct senior secondary examinations, in addition to those conducted by the WAEC, thus serves to reduce the WAEC's monopoly and creates greater avenues of access for numerous students.

In a related vein, he has served as a member of the editorial boards of numerous journals, including the *International Review of Education*, *Journal of Lifelong Learning*, *International Journal of Higher Education*, *Pedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *Continuing and Extension Education Quarterly*, *Journal of Adult Education Studies*, and *the Journal of Research in International Education*. He was also a consultant for Africa for the publication of the International Biography of Adult Education from 1981 to 1984. He supervised the first doctoral thesis on workers' education, which M.A.L. Omole completed in 1987 at the University of Ibadan. Omolewa was also the joint supervisor of the first Ph.D. awarded in adult education at a Nigerian university.

As can be readily seen from the foregoing, Omolewa has continuously sought to place access-related initiatives and discourse within appropriate theoretical and historical contexts. His endeavors have further reduced the degree of neglect commonly associated with access provision in education. Indeed, by bridging the realms of theory and practice, Omolewa's advocacy has had a profound impact on both.

3.2 Impact on distance education

Omolewa is a strong champion of distance education as a channel for widening access to mass education. His numerous publications in journals such as the *ICDE Bulletin*, *West African Journal of Education*, and *Adult Education in Nigeria* attest to this. He has continually affirmed that those who have resolved to invest their time, energy, and resources in obtaining university qualifications in Nigeria must be given the opportunity (Omolewa, 2001a,b). His steadfast advocacy in this regard was recognized when he was invited to become a foundation member of the Planning Committee and, subsequently, foundation staff member of the National Open University, a major Nigerian mass education initiative later suspended in 1984. This university has recently been revitalized and has already matriculated over 30,000 students.

He revitalized the vision of distance education when, as Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ibadan, he ensured that the proposal from the Department of Adult Education concerning the establishment of the External Studies Program (ESP) received University Senate approval in 1986. By 1988, as Head of the Department of Adult Education, he admitted the first group of roughly 1,000 students to the university's distance education program (Akinpelu and Omolewa, 1989). He was able to realize his vision in other outstanding programs, and also enjoyed tremendous support from his colleagues, among which programs were the extramural program and remedial classes. They have provided a second chance to potential undergraduates who would have ended up in motor parks as touts. Instead, many of these found their way back to school, and some of them have even become university lecturers.

It is noteworthy that the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) reemerged during the period in which Michael Omolewa was at UNESCO, a member of the Board of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), and was nominated and subsequently elected President of the UNESCO General Conference. Furthermore, in November 2002 the UNESCO Chair in Open and Distance Learning was inaugurated at NOUN. And the COL has agreed to establish a Training and Regional Centre for West Africa at NOUN. These are not mere coincidences but must be regarded as results of the many advocacy roles that Michael Omolewa has played and continues to play.

As evidence of his passion for distance education, we point to Omolewa's use of the tools of historical research to correct major national educational records. In one case, he focused on some landmarks in the history of education in Nigeria. On this he wrote:

Thus Fajana ignored the role of long distance learning in his survey of education by individual initiative . . . Ayandele omits the products

of distance learning from his list of educated elite, and chooses to focus attention, perhaps unwittingly, on products of formal institutions of America, Britain and Ireland. Thus he describes Azikwe as the Igbo's first University graduate even though Alvan Ikoku obtained his degree in 1929 from his base in Enugu when Azikwe was still negotiating with the authorities of Lincoln University in America for admission into the undergraduate programme ... (Omolewa, 1982: 5)

From 1986 to 1989, while he was Coordinator for West Africa in the African Association for Distance Education, Omolewa explored in seminars in Harare and Melbourne the application of new technologies for the practice of distance education. In 1984, as Foundation Professor at NOUN, he oversaw the development of course materials and the establishment of study centers for distance learners, as well as the promotion of the distance teaching program. He was the first director of the External Studies Program at the University of Ibadan. In 1992 he supervised the first two doctoral dissertations in distance education in Nigeria, in which Aderinoye (1992) examined *Retention and Failure in Distance Education: The Experience of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Kaduna* and Adekanmbi (1992) examined *The Transformation of Correspondence Education to Distance Education in Nigeria, 1927–1987*. In the early days of distance education in Africa—and even beyond—there was perhaps no scholar other than Omolewa who completed as many historical studies on developments in distance education.

Let us summarize the key aspects of his involvement in distance education:

- His tenacity in seeking to establish the University of Ibadan's External Studies Program, overcoming many obstacles thereby.
- His articles in such journals as *West African Journal of Education*, *Adult Education in Nigeria*, *International Journal of Historical Studies*, and the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, which initiated the discussion of distance education in Africa.
- His active involvement in the African Association for Distance Education, in which he served as Vice Chairman for West Africa.
- His efforts to set the record straight with historical analyses of events pertaining to education and distance education.
- His role as lead editor of the first major *Directory of Distance Education in Africa*.
- His membership in the COL Board.
- His supervision of the first two doctoral theses in distance education in Nigeria.
- His being the first Foundation Professor at the National Open University in Nigeria.

4. THE EMERGENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY VILLAGE ASSOCIATION (UNIVA)

Omolewa's continuing quest for access to EFA is backed by his strong belief not only that women and girls need basic education but that they must also have the opportunity to acquire skills that make them more efficient in dealing with the vital everyday issues, such as hygiene, food, the production of dye, tie, petty trading in batik and soap, and pomade making. Each of these can serve as a useful means for helping women to realize their need to become literate. To this end, Omolewa drafted numerous proposals. After what was often an uphill struggle, the IFESH saw the potential of his ideas and decided to support them fully. The outcome was the provision of funds for the total transformation of about 97 village communities in the rural areas surrounding the University of Ibadan. This led to the formation of UNIVA, an organization that, to quote its mission statement,

employs the partnership between the university and the village communities to assist the poor and the marginalized population towards sustainable development through innovative intervention strategies involving literacy, economic ventures, health and civic education. (UNIVA, 2000: 2)

In short, the activities and results of the project executed with the aid of UNIVA highlight Omolewa's commitment to the total transformation of the rural and urban poor through the provision of mass education. Many participants in the project have benefited from microcredit, civic education, and the health program that is integrated in the UNIVA-sponsored literacy programs. Even after Omolewa left to become Nigeria's Ambassador to UNESCO, these activities have continued.

Omolewa has published a number of books in connection with the UNIVA initiative. Their contents and methodologies testify to his advocacy of wider access to education, particularly basic functional education for the marginalized. The books also show that he has not remained satisfied with engaging in debates about policy, issuing communiqués, making recommendations, and increasing pressure on government and other institutions; on the contrary, they make it clear that, beyond his theoretical and scholarly endeavors, he also engaged in grassroots writing, mostly in the language of the people and at their level of understanding. Some of the books he coauthored with his team at UNIVA are *RLM Manual, Transparency and Governance Manual* (Omolewa et al., 2001), *HIV/AIDS Preventive Education Reader* (Rashid Aderinoye et al., 2002), and *Akitiyan oro aje (A Business Guide)*, as well as *The Open Door: Teaching Them to Teach Their Peers, Akii dagba eko (There is No Age Limit to Education)*, *Gbogbo re ni yio ditan (All Will Become History)*, *Now We Are*

Literate, and Reading for Development. A summary of the latter five provides insight into the character and content of the UNIVA publications.

(1) *The Open-Door: Teaching Them to Teach Their Peers* (Omolewa et al., 1990). This book is the outcome of a weeklong orientation workshop for adult literacy facilitators. One of its central aims was to engage new literates in dialogue on how to teach their peers. The neoliterates were provided with basic information on the meaning, history, cultural relevance, essence, and methods of teaching literacy. The importance of reading, writing, and record-keeping was also emphasized; women's and developmental issues, as well as why adult learners must be involved in the development of their own learning materials, were examined. With the book, facilitators are able to teach with greater ease. This book and the workshop that led to it have had a significant impact on access, which is most visible in the fact that more people are participating in literacy classes.

(2) *A kii dagba Eko (There is No Age Limit to Education)* (Omolewa et al., 1994). The title was perhaps inspired by a statement attributed to a former Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon. After ruling the country for 9 years, he went back to school and was quoted as saying, "There is no age limit to education." The book systematically introduces adults to the learning process from simple to complex, from known to unknown, with each unit of knowledge based on the adult learners' previous experience. Each stage of learning is modeled on activities associated with practices in the learners' context. It was carefully prepared without reference to what is generally associated with children's learning processes. Adults have found it useful, learnable, and a very good companion.

(3) *Gbogbo Re Ni Yio Ditan (All Will Become History)* (Oloyede, 1989). This publication aims to widen the understanding of adult learners. It is based on the belief that adults have experience, that they do not come to the class with empty brains but with particular needs that are based on their experience. These are needs, the authors realized, that would enhance prospects for better standards of living.

(4) *Facilitator's Manual on Real Literacy and Learner Generated Materials* (Omolewa et al., 1997). The book is built around a needs assessment survey, which identifies issues about which adults would like to become knowledgeable and what experiences they have in common and would like to read about in print. It is based on the principles of Real Literacy Material (RLM) or Learner Generated Material (LGM) and its emphasis is on a gradual process of introducing new topics and new life experiences, reminding adults of their past while preparing them for the future. The skills emphasized are those that are most needed: seeing, identifying, reading, and writing.

The book was thus designed to motivate adults to explore many possibilities aimed at preparing them to meet future challenges without necessarily losing their past. It provides good material for future leaders, such as

community heads, political leaders, secretaries of cultural associations, or other change agents. This book, too, has helped to generate awareness among the people, which was evident from the huge turnouts that were recorded in the literacy program following its publication.

(5) *Now We Are Literate* (Omolewa et al., 1997). In this book neoliterates freely expressed what they have gained through their participation in the functional literacy program, that is, the benefits or dividends as a result of their acquisition of literacy. More than 50 neoliterates contributed to the contents of the book. Addressing the issue of access here has led to gains in relevance as well as quality. Some neoliterates saw literacy as light and progress. Literacy has helped some to become better farmers. For others it has improved their business, since they are now able to keep records of sales, save money in banks, and provide buyers with receipts. It has also helped them to maintain privileged information. It has helped to improve their eyesight, much like the effect of the Mectizan tablet, the cure for river blindness disease. Some have developed spiritually since they can now read better their holy books and can address their congregations confidently. They have grown more self-confident and thus more assertive and authoritative. As a result of the microcredit scheme from which many benefited and the acquisition of vocational skills, they now earn more and have higher standards of living. Most of the beneficiaries have continued to thank the organization as they now monitor the education of their children and wards. The publication of the book has also led to an increase in adult classes and actual participant registration.

(6) *Reading for Development* (Omolewa et al., 1996). This book, written in English and Yoruba, contains information on most developmental activities that are common in the learners' immediate surroundings. These include content on how to construct community centers, vocational centers, roads, boreholes, and sanitation facilities. Also addressed are nutritional procedures, and income generating activities for women, including those dealing with business and farming. It informs learners on how best to carry out the activities identified in the book.

A look at Omolewa and his associates' submissions (Omolewa et al., 1998) on the best literacy practices as presented in the monumental work, *Literacy Tradition and Progress*, captures his central thoughts here:

- In literacy, everyone is a teacher of sorts, including the learners or participants in the literacy programs.
- An appropriate basis for literacy must be identified.
- The methodology and style of the curriculum should be interwoven in the educational process.
- The choice of language for instruction must be rooted in the people's culture.
- A pattern of evaluation rooted in the involvement of the people is important.

For the adult learners' graduation ceremonies, literacy graduates are assembled at the University of Ibadan Conference Centre to receive their

awards. The motive here is to expose the graduates and their relatives to the university community. It is also meant to remind them that their own children are expected to join others at the university. So if they have missed out on a university education, their children must not miss their chance, and the way to achieve that goal is to send their children to school. The effectiveness of this approach is attested by the fact that children of the literacy graduates have written to express their gratitude for the efforts of those involved in the literacy program.

5. CONCLUSION

Michael Omolewa's advocacy role is not confined to issues of adult education but bears on the education and the development discourse in general. Unmoved and unperturbed by the occasional seeming inconsistencies between government plans and actions, he has made use of his wealth of experience and finesse in order to address the problem of access in many ways. His vision of community empowerment through the utilization of existing traditional institutions is noteworthy. His mastery of various languages, French, English, German, Yoruba, and the unwritten language of the masses, is worthy of admiration in itself, but also because it has enabled him to drive home the importance of adult education in diverse contexts.

His reception in 1985 of the Robby Kidd Special Citation in Argentina from the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and his roles as President of the NNCAE, Vice Chairman of the AALAE from 1987 to 1989, Vice Chairman of the Education Sector of the Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO from 1994 to 1999, and Higher Education Links Programme Coordinator for the British Council from 1996 to 1999 all speak volumes about the esteem he enjoys in the international community but also about the power of the vision that has informed his advocacy roles.

Omolewa's sustained and active participation in conferences is further expression of his desire to link vision with mission, professorship with possession, theory with practice, and profession with action. He has been a pioneer at home and abroad. He has been a bridge builder, linking IFESH with rural villages and the university, the United States with Africa, academics and communities. His work with the COL has opened up new vistas for bridge-building between UNESCO and the Commonwealth nations.

There can be no doubt that the quality contacts and partnerships Omolewa has formed with educators, educationists, friends, and colleagues over the years have led to positive developments regarding access, relevance, and quality in educational provisions. We note in particular his relationship with the University of British Columbia, the University of London, the Max Planck Institut für Bildungsforschung in Berlin, the International Literacy Institute in the United States, and the University of Nottingham.

While Omolewa may not have been in complete agreement with deschoolers' position that the school is dead (Reimer, 1971; Illich, 1971) or that we should totally "deschool society," his proposals concerning peer teaching, the use of reference services to educators-at-large, and advocacy of making room for skills exchanges reflect some of the major proposals by that school of thought. For over 30 years he has vigorously promoted the idea of the rural-urban linkage and sought to encourage constructive dialogue on development-oriented issues. In many respects he is both an existentialist and a humanist. His ideas on literacy remind one of the cultural humanists' view that the language and cultural practices of a people should be emphasized when attempting to promote an authentic dialogue with them. History will decide one day how useful his idealistic tendencies ultimately have been, but we can say already now that many of them have been translated into specific pragmatic interventions, and that he has made considerable headway in his pursuit of widening access to education.

Omolewa's ability to integrate people's life-concerns, such as their rural economics and occupational aspirations, as components into the educational programs in which they participate has given a whole new meaning to the question of how to address access. He has made use of his knowledge of places of celebration, observed in traditional events, in the teaching and learning events in which he has been involved. As a result of the ideas he has implemented, many adults have continued to participate in various programs. His grasp of new management paradigms takes advantage of an array of previously untapped strategies in order to get the masses to return to school. And his use of historical studies to correct misjudgments and reassess opinions has helped to bring a new dimension to addressing adult-related educational needs. Omolewa is often generous in his use of language and style, as well as in the use of resources, humor, and praise. His impact on literacy, community development, rural economic strategies, adult and continuing education, workers' and liberal education, distance education, and the extramural provisions of various kinds, as well as research into these areas, has been immense. His publications in these areas are mammoth, his unconventional approaches worthy of emulation, and his use of participation laudable. He has been a leader in recognition of the good in the traditional African educational system, especially the identification and utilization of its holistic methodologies. In his Foreword to *Literacy Tradition and Progress* (Omolewa et al., 1998), Paul Belanger underscores the success of Omolewa's approach to access:

Traditional African education, as described in this work, is characterised by a holistic approach in which the individual learns through a continuous process interact with the community and with his or her environment. The use of this approach in literacy education has led to a

significantly higher success rate than the case with programmes based on purely formal methods. (Belanger, 1998: vii)

But even in all these, a response by Omolewa to access issues has its roots in his realization that there is a being that is above and watching, and ready to ask to what extent tools given to each person have been used to benefit the other, and the realization that exclusivity may not be in the dictionary of this Maker. In many cases, and on many occasions, Omolewa is keen to share his religion in his lectures, his speeches, his songs, and in his remarks. This helps to explain why he makes the issue of access a serious one at all times.

Perhaps it is best to conclude with the remarks of a septuagenarian, known as Baba Aderogba, one of the beneficiaries of the literacy programs that Omolewa has established. Aderogba was one out of about 6,000 people who have passed through the literacy program of UNIVA. Baba Aderogba summarizes his experience as follows:

I started ABC with Omolewa at the age of 65. Today I can read, write, and in fact speak pidgin English. He made me the ambassador of my community during the visit of the white men. I interpreted to the white men the request of my people. What I found myself doing now was what I saw the Colonial District Officers doing in Ile-Ife in my early days. If not for Omolewa, the lover of the people, who loves for others what he loves for himself, I would have remained illiterate for life. But I thank God, I thank Omolewa for making me an ambassador of my people. God will make him an ambassador in life.

What a prophetic statement! Michael Omolewa has become Nigeria's Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, as well as President of its General Conference. This is a natural extension of his advocacy role in the provision of educational access.

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Chapter 2

WIDENING ACCESS BY BRINGING EDUCATION HOME

Roger W. Boshier

1. LEAPING LOGS AND DODGING DOGS

In 1983, an African scholar landed at Vancouver International Airport. He had won an International Development Research Centre “South–North” Scholarship and was far too boisterous for someone just off a long flight. Standing at the baggage collection point, he was told about his duties in Canada, and they included running the Vancouver Marathon. He had no running shoes or shorts. But, within minutes of reaching the university, this problem was rectified by borrowing shoes from Daniel Rubenson.

Within days, Michael Omolewa was in training. The University of British Columbia sits in a garden setting on a peninsula overlooking the Gulf Islands and vast Pacific Ocean beyond. University architects ensured dense forest separated town from gown. Now the forest concealed the swift Nigerian leaping logs and dodging dogs. He also came to the lunchtime fitness class.

We had no office for the visitor. Hence, he was put in a basement storeroom with brooms, photocopying paper, publications, and Christmas tree decorations. Putting him in the storeroom was bad enough, but our embarrassment quadrupled when he produced a paper about the earliest days of correspondence education in British Columbia. This paper was his gift to us.

Despite his later emergence as an important player in educational politics at a global level, in his soul he is a man from the village. He values the farm-gate (or self-educated) intellectual (Boshier, 2002) and understands education ought to be fun. But, best of all, in 2004, Michael Omolewa is still the mischievous rascal that stepped off the plane in 1983. Even after rising to the highest ranks of international diplomacy, his heart is committed to fostering access to education for men and women, boys and girls, formally educated and farm-gate learners of the village.

In June 2004, Omolewa was in Vancouver. We explored old haunts and organized the first ever University of British Columbia (UBC) “Africa

Day” where, for a change, Africans talked with each other. But where is the old Adult Education building? The one where he was in the storeroom and Paulo Freire had an office? Gone. Replaced by “development.”

Walking through forest where we once ran, we ruminate about the meaning of September 11, 2001 and agree the world is meaner and more dangerous. After World War II the architects of UNESCO thought education could save the world. What now? Is it still possible to have mass or fundamental education? Or, even better, the utopian “education for all?” And what about UNESCO? It wants to foster access to all forms of learning and education. Can it be done and, if so, how?

2. UNESCO’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO “ACCESS”

After World War II UNESCO was committed to building mass and then fundamental education. Later, in one of the most erudite and conceptually sound attempts to foster access, it advanced the notion of lifelong education as a “master concept” for educational reform. What these and other concepts (such as “education for all”) shared was a commitment to the idea education was too important to be left to educators in formal settings. The task of fostering learning and education had to be diffused throughout society. The best way of making things more accessible was to expand the playing field. Education ought not to be a synonym for school.

Many citizens and Ministers of Education still think education only occurs in schools, colleges and universities. If a country can afford formal education, it is surely worth having. But no society can depend on formal settings to satisfy all learning needs of the citizenry. Moreover, if it were possible to detect all instances of education, mappers would find most occurs in informal and nonformal settings. Although schools and universities are prominent, they contain only a tiny part of what goes on under the rubric of education.

After World War II many new countries awoke after independence celebrations to find they had inherited an educational system with little relevance to the cultural or material facts of life in a tribal or agricultural society. Colonial school systems were not all bad, but learning to read with a book about Janet and John and their dog Spot walking on the beach at Brighton did not resonate with adult or child learners in Nigeria, Jamaica, New Zealand, India, Malaysia, or other outposts of Empire.

It was these and other aspects of the world educational crisis (Coombs, 1985) that triggered UNESCO’s interest in lifelong education. Despite the fact the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) later co-opted the terminology (but not the political commitments)

of lifelong education and refashioned it as lifelong learning (OECD, 1996a,b), the Faure Report (1972) was, without doubt, one of the outstanding educational reform documents of the twentieth century. It had more impact than the later Delors Report (1996) and is still a good template for reform. In the context of this volume, Faure is important because *Learning to Be* mostly focuses on access to education. It is also a happy coincidence that Omolewa—the former runner and man of the moment—rose to become the Nigerian Ambassador to UNESCO and President of the General Conference.

It would have been good to have Michael Omolewa at UNESCO at the time of Faure. Edgar Faure was something of a renaissance man who wrote musical scores and detective novels. At the age of 19, he earned a doctoral degree. He had an old-fashioned sense of honor. Once, after having his motives questioned by a magazine reporter, he challenged the writer to a duel. Notoriously nearsighted, he was waving the pistol when a colleague talked him out of it. He was also something of a father figure and, in France, known affectionately as Edgar. René Maheu's decision to ask Faure to head the International Commission was fortuitous. Had Faure known Michael Omolewa, they would have been friends. But to have Mike at UNESCO now is a pleasure indeed.

2.1 “Master concept” for reform

In December 1965, UNESCO received a paper from Paul Lengrand which recommended the organization endorse lifelong education. After the French riots of 1968 and worldwide critique of higher education, René Maheu, Secretary-General of UNESCO, created an International Commission on the Development of Education. Despite the absence of women, Maheu attempted to secure commissioners from contrasting cultural settings. One was Majid Rahnema who had been a career ambassador for much of his life (Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997). In addition to Faure and Rahnema, the Commission included Felipe Herrera (a Chilean banker), Abdul-Razzak Kaddoura (a nuclear physicist from Syria), Henri Lopes (Minister of Education from the Congo), Arthur Petrovsky (a scientist from the USSR), and Frederick Champion Ward (an educator from the Ford Foundation). Rahnema and Herrera were soul mates. Petrovsky tended to represent his government's viewpoint, which created difficulties for others.

In *Learning to Be* (Faure, 1972), lifelong education was proposed as a master concept for reform of entire educational systems. A proper application of lifelong education would result in a learning society in which access to and participation in education would be taken-for-granted—an inalienable human right like clean water or roof over one's head. After 1972 the

UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg undertook large-scale projects to elaborate what lifelong education meant for teacher training, curriculum reform, evaluation, libraries, and other matters (e.g., Cropley, 1977, 1979, 1980).

1972 was a halcyon year for educational reform and, at about the time delegates met at the Tokyo Conference on Adult Education, UNESCO released *Learning To Be* (Faure, 1972). 1972 was also the year of the influential UN Conference on the Environment, held in Stockholm, where delegates considered the *Blueprint for Survival*, assembled by the editors of *Ecologist* (Goldsmith et al., 1972), and the Club of Rome Report, *Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al., 1972). It was also the year of the progressive Worth Report (1972) in Alberta, influenced by recurrent education (Kallen, 1979) and the Wright Commission Report (1972) (in Ontario) on the need for a learning society.

The architecture of the Faure Report was organized around three concepts: the vertical integration, horizontal integration, and democratization of educational systems. A vertically and horizontally integrated and democratized system of education would result in what Faure called a “learning society.”

Figure 2-1 is my rendering of what the Faure commissioners were talking about. Extant educational systems assign an undue emphasis to the education of young people in formal settings (quadrant 3). In a learning society, there would be a more equal distribution of resources and emphasis on each quadrant. Hence, there would be as much emphasis on the education of young people in nonformal (quadrant 4) as in formal settings (quadrant 3). Likewise, there would be considerable emphasis on the education of older people (adults) in formal (quadrant 2) and nonformal settings (quadrant 1). Each quadrant is the same size as the other. In a learning society, there would be a more-or-less equal amount of emphasis on education in each of the four quadrants.

The vertical and horizontal lines in Figure 2-1 should be permeable. A child or adult learner would be able to swim back and forth, securing education in a formal setting today and a nonformal one tomorrow. The emphasis would not be on where a learner gets educated. Rather, the focus would be on what is learned. Furthermore, there would be a more relaxed attitude about prerequisites. Learning does not always occur in linear ways and learners could secure access to higher levels without always having done the so-called prerequisites.

2.2 Learning and education

“Learning” and “education” are often used interchangeably. This can be a source of confusion. The notion of lifelong learning has little theoretical

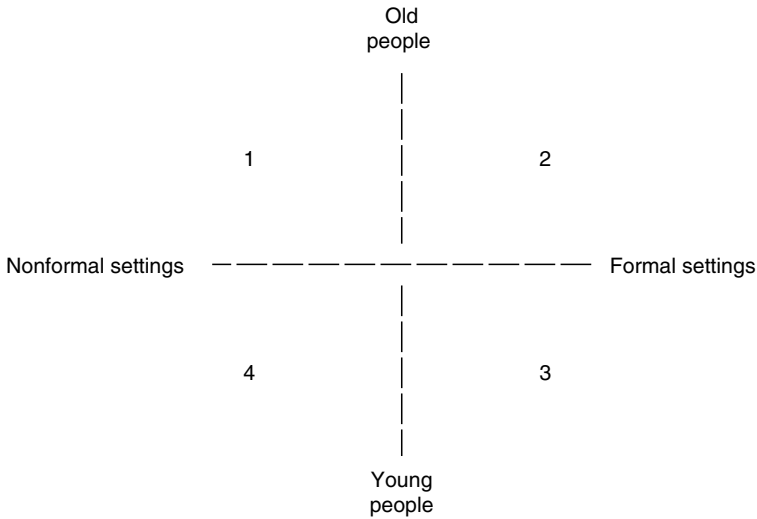


Figure 2-1. Dimensions of lifelong education.

juice since learning (as an internal change in behavior) is an inevitable corollary of life. Some advocates of lifelong learning specifically reject the use of “learning” to label a psychological construct and instead use it as a gerund to describe an array of behaviors that sound very much like education. For example, Tough’s (1971) adult learning projects had the deliberate and systematic qualities normally associated with education. But practitioners should be wary because “lifelong learning” denotes a less emancipatory and more oppressive set of relationships than does “lifelong education”.

Education is the optimal (and usually systematic) arrangement of external conditions that foster learning. Education is a provided service. Lifelong education requires someone—often government or other agencies—develop policy and devote resources to education that will preferably occur in a broad array of informal, nonformal, and formal settings. Deliberate choices must be made. Hence, whereas lifelong learning is nested in a notion of the autonomous free-floating individual learner as consumer, lifelong education requires public policy and deliberate action. Lifelong learning is a way of abdicating responsibility, of avoiding hard choices by putting learning on the open market. If the learner as consumer does not decide to take advantage of available opportunities, then it is his or her fault. It is easier to blame the victim than overcome structural or psychocultural barriers to participation.

3. FOSTERING ACCESS THROUGH LIFELONG EDUCATION

The Faure Report made 21 major recommendations pertaining to four concepts: vertical integration, horizontal integration, democratization, and the learning society.

3.1 Vertical integration

The vertical dimension in Figure 2-1 refers to the life span aspect of lifelong education, the idea education should occur throughout life, from cradle to grave. There are profound psychosocial and structural barriers that impede the ability of people to opt in and out of education throughout their lives. In a vertically integrated system, structural barriers would be removed by passing appropriate legislation (such as on paid educational leave). However, equal opportunity does not automatically translate into equal participation because earlier encounters with schools have made adults reluctant to return to education. Hence, it is naive to think merely facilitating access (as in distance education or distributed learning) will overcome the historic tendency for formal education to reproduce unequal power relations. Access, by itself, is not enough because it fails to overcome adverse psychocultural factors that impede participation. Faure's notion sparked extensive research on who participates in education and why, but no such tendency is visible in recent constructions of lifelong learning.

3.2 Horizontal integration

Horizontal integration (or interaction) refers to the need to foster education in a plethora of nonformal as well as formal settings. The architects of lifelong education believed it intolerable to have a situation in which education secured in formal settings results in status and credentials, whereas education gained in nonformal, let alone informal, settings secures few credentials and no status. If someone needs to learn how to pilot their fishing boat, file taxes, fix their tractor, run their computer, or get along better with their children or spouse, does it matter if these things are learned in school or nonformal (out-of-school) or informal settings? What counts is what is learned, not where it was learned. There should be a more relaxed attitude about the value of nonformal and informal settings. Such an approach should not necessarily lead to the banality of "prior learning assessment" and assessing "competencies".

Typically, education in formal settings is paid for by governments and results in the award of widely recognized credentials. Education secured in nonformal settings is largely unorganized, struggles with meager resources,

is regarded as outside the mainstream, and has a stigma attached to it. What Faure envisaged was not a dismantling of formal settings. Rather, the Faure Report proposed developing a more pluralistic and accessible array of opportunities for education throughout the life cycle. Integration or interaction is needed.

These days formal and nonformal settings are like two parallel railway lines. Both cross the land but never touch. Formal settings have little to do with the nonformal. Hence schoolteachers know little about the education children secure at their Scout or Guide group, at summer camp, church, at the community center, or in other nonformal educational settings. As for informal settings, try and pull your child out of school to take a trip to a foreign country and listen to the head teacher complain. All too often, learning in informal settings is not considered “real” education.

There are informal, nonformal, and formal settings for education. It is confusing to speak of formal or nonformal education because it suggests formality of processes is the issue. There are many nonformal educational settings (such as in prisons or the workplace) where the processes are as rigid as those found in formal settings such as universities. The intent of this tripartite distinction is to portray education as something that occurs throughout society. Educators, particularly those in formal settings, should not have a monopoly on education. The worst thing that could happen to education is to have it all fall into the hands of educators.

In this analysis, formal settings are those age-graded, credential-awarding schools, colleges, universities, and similar settings usually under the control of the Ministry of Education. Nonformal are “out-of-school” educational settings such as community centers, churches, prisons, and workplaces. Instructional processes employed in nonformal settings may be quite formal. Finally, people also learn in informal settings through exposure to media, through conversations, casual and incidental encounters in community settings, trade shows, or public awareness campaigns. Although people learn in informal settings—and in AIDS and other campaigns it is important they do so—this is not education.

3.3 Democratization

Cutting across vertical and horizontal integration is the need for democratization, which refers to the need to remove barriers that impede access to education. Furthermore, learners should have greater involvement in the design and management of educational processes. These are linked. Simply expediting access does not represent much progress unless learners become more extensively involved in creating their educational agenda.

4. LEARNING SOCIETY

Lifelong education is utopian and calls for more than a mere tinkering with educational systems. As the first recommendation of the Faure Report noted, lifelong education requires a complete restructuring of educational systems. It is probably easier to implement in countries where formal education is not well developed. A successful application of the principles of lifelong education would result in creation of a learning society (see Boshier, 1980; Edwards, 1997).

4.1 The great terminology robbery

In 1960s the notion of lifelong education had been conceptually elaborated but rarely applied (Lengrand, 1970, 1989). UNESCO did not want the same fate to befall the work of Faure (1972). Hence, after 1972, the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg was tasked with continuing the theoretical analyses but also, and most important, showing how to apply lifelong education. During this period the UNESCO Institute in Hamburg was lead by Ravindra Davé. He well understood the radical potential of lifelong education and, under his leadership, the Institute produced a torrent of publications (e.g., Dave, 1976).

4.2 Chasing the getaway car

While UNESCO was orchestrating the Faure Report, the OECD was working on recurrent education. Hints of what might lie ahead were contained in *Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning* (OECD, 1973). Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme had been keen on recurrent education and, when his assistant, Jarl Bengtson, secured a position at the OECD, this mostly Scandinavian idea became its leitmotif. “The concept of recurrent education intends to propose a concrete framework within which a great part of the individuals lifelong learning can take place The principles of alternation between education and other activities are central to this definition” (OECD, 1973: 12). This was one of several formulations concerning lifelong learning (Titmus, 1989).

Recurrent education soon lost traction. It was too oriented to the workplace and rich countries to be of interest in Africa or other less affluent parts of the world. Besides, the idea of “alternating” work with education bore little relationship to how most people (even in rich countries) secured an education. People pursue education while continuing to work, through part-time study and a plethora of other options. Some countries created programs of paid educational leave to foster alternation (OECD, 1978) but,

after the OPEC crisis of the 1970s, oil prices soared and the impetus for paid educational leave diminished.

With recurrent education dead in the water and no sign of new wind, OECD planners had to do something. What happened next was extraordinary. With barely a nod or two to UNESCO, the OECD committed a theft more audacious than the Great Train Robbery. After burying recurrent education, the OECD switched to lifelong learning. Schuetze (2004) was one of the undertakers who helped bury recurrent education, but claims not too much should be read into the OECD's hijacking of lifelong education. Although it may have looked like the OECD pinched the UNESCO terminology (though not the politics), recurrent education had been envisaged as a "strategy" for lifelong learning. However, the techno-rational and functionalist orientation of the OECD was exposed by reducing UNESCO's utopian "master concept" to a "strategy".

At the time, UNESCO was perched on the edge of a budgetary and political crisis. Although aware OECD was filching concepts, there was no point calling the theory police. In cafés along the Seine, universities, and UNESCO offices around the world, observers marveled at the audacity of a rich-country-club (OECD) appearing to make off with terminology (and possibly architecture) designed by UNESCO. Nothing could be gained by chasing the getaway car because, being from the OECD, it had plenty of power and money. Hence it gathered speed and, to this day, architects of the OECD version of lifelong learning rarely look back. Their mission is driven by skills, competencies, and needs of transnational capital.

4.3 Mean animal

Nobody was charged or convicted for swiping UNESCO terminology. However, the legacy of these events lives on. There is a profound difference between lifelong education (UNESCO/Faure) and lifelong learning (OECD). But many practitioners and bureaucrats use them as synonyms. The original OECD conception of lifelong learning was infused with a social democratic ethos much like the Faure Report. But these days the OECD (1996a, b) version of lifelong learning is a more selfish animal than the social democratic utopia envisaged by Faure.

Lifelong learning as discourse renders social conditions (and inequality) invisible. Predatory capitalism is unproblematized. Lifelong learning tends to be nested in an ideology of vocationalism. Learning is for acquiring skills to enable the learner to work harder, faster, and smarter and, as such, position their employer to better compete in the global economy. Lifelong learning also denotes the unproblematized notion of the savvy individual consumer surfing the Internet.

Lifelong learning tends to render invisible any obligation on the part of educators to address social conditions. As discourse, it spawned dubious ideas, such as the notion society is now (but was not previously) “knowledge-based”.

Under the flag of lifelong learning, the savvy consumer surfs the Internet to select from a smorgasbord of privatized educational offerings. Learning is an individual activity. Hence lifelong learning is favored by advocates of an information economy prone to make vast generalizations about technology-mediated forms of learning.

Lifelong learning is a “regime of truth” (Foucault, 1980) and as regime of truth is a signifier for adapting to the needs of the global economy. It is this that evoked the shift from education to learning. This is a source of concern because “the concept of learning floats free from designated and concrete meanings” and “unless civil societarian adult educators claim ‘learning’ for themselves, giving it a socially anchored, contextual meaning, the neo-conservatives will run away with it” (Welton, 1997: 33).

5. MISAPPREHENSIONS

Although the utopian thinking of Faure (1972) still represents an emancipatory template for reform, there is now a tendency to dismiss it as “unrealistic”. In the meantime, new information technologies have evoked intense competitiveness between educational agencies and the specter of privatized academics and isolated learners tapping into expensive and often poorly constructed courses on the Internet.

The idea of lifelong education as “master concept” has been abandoned in favor of cherry-picking a few ideas and rejecting the rest. Neoliberal notions of lifelong learning have now almost overwhelmed earlier notions of lifelong education. Among problems arising from cherry-picking ideas while rejecting the master concept are the following:

- Lifelong learning is often constructed as a new market for higher education. Hence there is primary, secondary, and higher education followed by lifelong learning. This is the way lifelong learning is constructed at the University of British Columbia. It is an upmarket version of continuing professional education.
- Formal and nonformal settings are like two parallel railway lines. Both cross the landscape but rarely touch. Formal settings have little to do with the nonformal. Some people dismiss learning in nonformal and informal settings. It is not “real” education.
- Little is known about high-performing farm-gate learners who, without “benefit” of formal education, learn in nonformal or informal settings and make major achievements (e.g., Peter Jackson, film; Tom Schnackenberg, sailing; Bill Gates, software) (Boshier, 2002).

- Lifelong learning is reduced to an empty slogan. With the exception of the sign above the door not much changes. The “Adult Education Centre” becomes the “Lifelong Learning Centre.”
- Lifelong learning is deployed as instructional techniques gutted of politics.
- Lifelong learning is used as a rationale for inflicting (often oppressive and authoritarian) forms of mandatory education on already marginalized citizens.
- Lifelong learning comes to be equated with lifelong schooling.

6. RECLAIMING LIFELONG LEARNING FOR THE LEARNING VILLAGE

The Hamburg-based UNESCO Institute for Education poured enormous energy, time, and intellectual vigor into showing how abstract aspects of lifelong education could be applied. The biggest barrier to implementing lifelong education was it required a complete restructuring of educational systems. Where schools and other attributes of formal education were in short supply or ruined by war, there was a chance of building a lifelong educational system from the ground up. But wherever formal education was well developed, few school, college, or university educators opened themselves to the ethos of nonformal, let alone informal settings. Horizontal integration is still mostly an illusion.

Nowhere did anyone build the kind of utopian learning society envisaged by Faure. Instead, much like what happened with Ivan Illich’s ideas about “deschooling”, people embraced parts suiting their needs and ignored the rest. As a result, there is plenty of rhetoric about learning in out-of-school settings, but few examples of educators in formal circumstances adopting the ethos of nonformal settings. Although most countries have more vertically integrated systems than was the case in 1972, there are few manifestations of horizontal integration.

As well as covering a vast landscape, Faure’s template for reform was mostly aimed at policy-makers working at the macrolevel. By making recommendations to Ministers of Education and UNESCO national commissions, Faure hoped to persuade governments to restructure entire education systems.

Lifelong education was mugged on the road to the twenty-first century (Boshier, 1998). However, in recent years, it has made a comeback. Not, however, as a master concept at the national level as anticipated by Faure. Rather, the chief arena for action resides in villages, cities, or towns. Efforts to develop learning villages, cities, islands, towns, or neighborhoods foster access and conviviality. Now there is a space for the formally uneducated but nevertheless wise man or woman from the village.

6.1 Farm-gate intellectuals

Conventional wisdom claims countries with poorly organized universities or low education participation rates can expect to fall behind. Higher and tertiary education is an absolute necessity in an era of high technology and globalization. But what's this? Many who excel in international arenas are not products of tertiary and higher education. Many have little or no formal education. Some—like Sir Edmund Hillary (1999)—have grave misgivings about school and a spectacular lack of accomplishment at university. Almost all are farm-gate intellectuals—people who learn without “benefit” of higher education. A farm-gate intellectual will use technology and go to libraries, but have little respect for disciplinary boundaries. They are almost always generalists, suspicious of authorities, and have considerable respect for what is heard across the gate. Want to fix the tractor? Go to the gate and talk to Kwasi, Bill, José, or Yan.

Most countries have farm-gate intellectuals. Africa, Australia, and New Zealand have more than their share. In each place they are part of an anarchist–utopian tradition that has roots in the colonial experience—where there was lack of access to education matched by a pressing need to work together and learn from each other (Omolewa, 1987; Boshier, 2002, 2004a).

Recent accomplishments by “uneducated” New Zealanders suggest the Kiwi penchant for spectacular learning outside formal education remains intact. Filmmaker Peter Jackson (*Heavenly Creatures*, *The Frighteners*, *Lord of the Rings*, *King Kong*) is an “uneducated” former pressman from the *Evening Post* newspaper. He has never attended university. Ed Hillary's university career was comprised of “two miserable years” and no success at exams. Norman Kirk was a formally uneducated boilermaker who became Prime Minister. It was the same for Bruce McLaren—motor racing genius and master of improvization. With very little education, Ashton-Warner (1958, 1963) became a zany educational leader and superb novelist. Bill Hamilton (marine jet drives) and Richard Pearse (heavier-than-air flight) were both “uneducated” farmers. Three-time America's Cup (sailing) winner Tom Schnackenberg is a University of British Columbia dropout. Educators—on both the left and right, and throughout the world—ought to be interested in how such people learn. If they do not learn from formal education, where does their talent come from? What can formal education learn from them?

Farm-gate intellectuals are a manifestation of anarchist–utopianism in adult education (Boshier, 2002, 2004a). In the late 1960s and early 1970s it seemed as if authorities could not be trusted and official education was (wrongly) dismissed as irrelevant and largely a tool to perpetuate the privilege of elites. These and related sentiments were found in influential books. Most notably, Illich (1970a) called for “deschooling.” For him

schools were largely baby-sitting operations to keep children docile, off the streets, and away from important community arenas for learning. Instead, citizens needed learning exchanges, peer-matching groups, and learning webs. *Deschooling Society* was the first in a series of analyses in which Illich condemned professions as self-serving. Others were *Celebration of Awareness* (Illich, 1970b) and *Tools for Conviviality* (Illich, 1973).

Learning of the kind that can change the world is more apt to occur on the way to or from school. The trouble with school is children learn things the teacher does not want them to know. In much the same vein, Goodman (1964) condemned *Compulsory Miseducation*, Holt (1964) provided a radical-functional explanation for *Why Children Fail*, Freire (1972) complained about false consciousness limiting human capacities. What Freire (1972) wanted was a *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that would largely occur in nonformal and informal settings.

6.2 Learning villages, towns, and cities

One of the most promising developments of the twentieth century—stemming more from a Faure than OECD ethos—concerns learning cities, towns, villages, or festivals. The boisterous and colorful Pasifika in Auckland, New Zealand, and similar events in Southeast Europe or Africa (Walters and Etkind, 2004) are good examples of festivals that appeal to all ages and collapse boundaries between learning, entertainment and culture.

In a learning city (town or village) there are attempts to foster all forms of learning for citizens old and young and in many contexts. The town or city has become a preferred site for learning because of, for example, the failure of national plans for educational reform. Learning cities are committed to learning as a core aspect of development. In addition to catching dogs and servicing sewers, the city fosters learning. The village, town or city seeks to sustain economic activity by building social capital.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, about 20 communities in Britain declared they were learning cities. In New Zealand, Wanganui and Waitakere went in this direction (Boshier, 2003). Information technology helps but is not essential. What matters most are local places and spaces. These are both prominent in the most erudite postmodern reflections on lifelong learning (Edwards, 1997).

China has 61 nascent learning cities. The Communist Party has also nurtured learning families, districts, police stations, hospitals, and, in Jiangxi province, the beautiful Lushan—a learning mountain (Boshier and Huang, 2005a, b). In China, learning cities are designed to stimulate further modernization, build a more “civilized” nation, and broaden

the mission (and consolidate the legitimacy) of the Communist Party (Boshier, 2004b,c).

A learning city (town or village) is

a form of community development in which local people from every sector act together to enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions of their community. It is a pragmatic approach that mobilizes learning resources and expertise of all five community sectors:

- Civic or local government
- Economic (private or cooperative enterprise)
- Public (libraries, recreation commissions, social agencies, arts councils, health bodies, museums, etc.)
- Education (kindergarten to university)
- Voluntary/community/individual citizens

Formal (school, colleges, university) and nonformal settings (civic, economic, public, and voluntary) . . . are therefore harnessed . . . according to the needs and priorities set by the community. In every community, local initiatives currently underway are not replaced but built upon by the learning community approach (Faris, 2001).

Learning cities arose because of the increasing difficulty of identifying with the nation-state and longstanding tendency of citizens to find meaningful aspects of life in their own backyard. Learning cities are committed to learning as a core aspect of development. They sustain economic activity by combining conviviality, innovation and information technologies.

Although it might help to have adult education providers, the learning city need not be inhibited by their absence. Well-established educational institutions can inhibit momentum needed to build a learning city because it is hard for them to get beyond historical and sometimes-grim strictures of classroom practice. In a learning city, it is vital to ensure there is horizontal integration between partners and power is exercised in a balanced fashion.

6.3 Building a learning village, town, or city

There should not be any one version of a learning village, town, or city. How each place gets there will depend on leadership and local factors. The necessary steps are:

- *Educate leaders*: Educate opinion leaders about what distinguishes fluid and broad notions of lifelong education from older, narrower, and, in some ways, dysfunctional notions of training. Learning ought to become the

preoccupation of every agency and setting (not just those in the business of education).

- *Identify resources:* Create an inventory of community resources for learning. Focus on who knows what and who needs to learn. Identify learners, teachers (in the broad sense of the word), and settings for learning. Pay particular attention to skilled and interesting older people along with community resources and settings not normally deemed to be in the fabric of education. Highlight people, resources, and settings that distinguish your community from others.
- *Partnerships and links:* Identify informal and formal partnerships. Ask about the extent to which these—along with new ones to be developed—can be harnessed for learning. Pay particular attention to organizations and individuals with deep roots in the community. Include newcomers. Strive for diversity. This might require forging relationships with people who do not come across as natural allies such as businesses, churches, sporting groups, and professional societies.
- *Technology:* In Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, the learning village or city might be less dependent on high technology than in Europe. Nevertheless, networking is important and digital technologies useful. Hence identify local resources (such as computer or Internet-savvy young or old people) and bottlenecks (such as authoritarian Internet policies in libraries) inhibiting connectivity and learning.
- *Social justice:* Identify and involve groups prominent because of their previous lack of participation in community life. Secure the cooperation and leadership skills of optimal role models who are socially motivated and have a facility for working with citizens for whom learning is potentially life-transforming. When building advisory committees, conducting consultations, or doing research, be sure those normally excluded are actively recruited.
- *Learning as a social process:* Many citizens have unhappy memories of school. They think learning is an individual and unpleasant endeavor. Ensure there is a festive and convivial atmosphere at learning events. Pitch them to families and groups. Remove the threat of individual learning by making it a group process.
- *Conduct research:* Merely declaring oneself a learning city will not suffice. Any serious attempt to become a learning city will, to a large extent, depend on its ability to understand itself. Hence it should stimulate research—some traditional and theory-laden. But there is also a need for participatory, narrative, and ethnographic forms of enquiry that utilize community members as researchers and draws upon a broad range of local (not just university, college, or professional) resources.

7. MOEAWATEA LEARNING VILLAGE

In Aotearoa, New Zealand, Dave Harré took the notion of learning village and planted it onto a remote Taranaki hillside where 14 marginalized young people worked to restore a historic farm cottage once occupied by social activist and writer Rewi Alley (Chapple, 1980). They lived, worked, and, in some cases, slept together for 4 months and in the end could fairly claim Alley’s house had been saved (Harré and Boshier, 1999).

The Moeawatea process draws energy from a critical analysis of society and is deliberately oriented towards marginalized youth—rather than an elite. It is not liberal or comfortable. It was designed to resist the social dislocation of neoliberalism that arose from *The New Zealand Experiment* (Kelsey, 1995) with right-wing economics and intended as an antidote to confusion that followed the neoliberal attack on adult education (Benseman, 2003). It involved young people, heritage conservation, house construction, and conviviality, working together and learning. It was nested in a critical rather than a liberal view of education and can be compared with service learning (Eyler and Giles, 1999).

Table 2-1 shows the contrasting elements of orthodox service learning and the Moeawatea process.

Teachers using recognizable methodologies of educational administration govern service learning. In the learning village or Moeawatea process, the word “governance” is too grand to describe what is a dynamic, unstructured but supportive process. Daily meetings were held at which the leader

Table 2-1. Contrasting elements in “service learning” and the “Moeawatea process.”

Service learning	Moeawatea process
A. Organizational setting	
Formal	Nonformal
B. Participation class orientation	
Elite (included)	Underclass (excluded)
C. Governance	
Ordered	Disordered
D. Conceptual orientation of purposes/processes	
Liberal	Critical
E. Level of abstraction	
Abstract	Concrete
F. Reflective orientation	
Accommodating	Challenging
G. Mode of operations	
Individualistic	Collective
H. Place of role models	
Covert	Overt

tended to listen rather than intervene. In the Moeawatea process, relationships between participants are ideally characterized as:

- Respectful but challenging
- Horizontal
- Based on consultation
- Involving mutual consent

In service learning participants develop insights into themselves and the human condition. The aim is to foster individual self-actualization. Although service learning draws sustenance from Dewey's (1916) notion of experiential learning, there is no significant critique of structural conditions that cause social problems. The Moeawatea process inverts normal power relations and deliberately seeks the participation of participants excluded by "grand" or "think big" approaches to learning and conservation. It also echoes traditional New Zealand commitments to the do-it-yourself ethos and working miracles with number eight fencing wire.

The Moeawatea process depends on *whanau* (Maori for "extended family"). Working on a heritage-building project, particularly in an isolated rural area, the well-being of each individual and the project depends upon the ability of people to work together. Preparing breakfast for 14 people can be a challenge for someone who has never cooked before. But it can evoke a high level of cooperation and satisfaction. It is utopian to think everyone will work together in perfect harmony. But out of struggle emerged triumph. It took about four months to restore Rewi Alley's house.

This was a life-transforming experience for some participants. For example, Toni Leen is now head chef for musicians such as Paul McCartney, Michael Jackson, and Shania Twain. In June 2004 she was in Vancouver with the Shania Twain tour. As well as going to the concert and witnessing backstage culture of a global megaspectacle, I had a chance to hear Toni Leen explain how the learning village at Moeawatea changed her life.

The working-class Leen family lived in a state house in Wanganui, New Zealand. Toni's attachment to schooling was intermittent and unhappy. However, as a result of living, working, and learning at Moeawatea, she saw the merits of social inclusion and virtue of working hard and together. She also met Hugh McFarlane.

Today she cites direct links between the learning village at Moeawatea and the entertainment business (Leen, 2004). At Moeawatea she learned to cook for a crowd of dispossessed youth. How does this relate to cooking for Shania Twain, 150 band members, riggers, pyrotechnic technicians, security personnel, and other roadies making up a gigantic worldwide stadium rock concert tour? Like Moeawatea viewed through a big magnifying glass.

Toni Leen and Hugh McFarlane went from an isolated learning village in rural New Zealand to the absolute apex of global popular culture.

7.1 Going forward together

In recent decades rich countries have dramatically increased access to formal education. In Canada this has been done by developing community colleges. In New Zealand (after 1984) there was a proliferation of private training enterprises (Boshier, 2000, 2001; Benseman, 2003). However, what has long been understood in poorer parts of the world is still evident in rich countries. It is not possible to have everyone attending a college or university. It is even a challenge to get children into schools.

Despite the demonstrated importance of education and passionate exhortations to do better, the best formal settings for education still cater to socioeconomic elites. Moreover, as high-achieving farm-gate intellectuals demonstrate, formal education is not a necessary prerequisite to health, happiness, or prosperity. Formal education also seems to have nothing to do with extraordinary acts of creativity demonstrated by, for example, Peter Jackson and his *Lord of the Rings*, or university-dropout Bill Gates of Microsoft. It does not explain the humanity and commitment of a man like Ed Hillary. And what about Nelson Mandela who did one of those “second-best” distance education programs while an inmate on Robben Island? Formal education does not explain the genius or leadership of Mandela.

Coombs (1985), Lengrand (1970, 1989), Faure (1972), and other architects of the UNESCO version of lifelong education wanted to break the monopoly on education enjoyed by formal settings. They wanted learning and education to be the preoccupation of all sectors of society. Now would be a good time to bring things back to the village, town, or city. Despite the promises of connective technologies, the most congenial forms of education mostly reside near home. Some local authorities will groan when told their responsibilities now include learning. Moreover, they will try to offload these responsibilities to the local school, college, or university. This would be a mistake since the best people to let loose on fledgling learners (in the village or town) are not always associated with formal education. In the learning village there should be room for the wise elder, farm-gate intellectuals, artists, musicians, activists, craftspeople, farmers, and ordinary citizens.

In the 1980s citizens were told to “think globally, act locally.” But informed action requires learning and thought. For guidance on what is needed, here is Michael Omolewa, man of the moment. He shows how to learn locally and act globally.

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Chapter 3

ACCESS TO EDUCATION: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

H. S. Bhola

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of “access to education” is as old as education itself. Full-fledged national systems of education could not have been conjured up and willed into existence as fully functioning total systems, instantaneously. Indeed, all through history, national educational systems have been built slowly and incrementally. Providers of education have necessarily been selective regarding location of schools and enrollment of learners—with considerations of population densities, as well as the gender, class, and creed of prospective learners. Consequently, education has more often than not been a “rationed good”—especially good quality education, and education at relatively higher levels of the educational pyramid.

2. FRAMEWORKS

To enable a communicative discourse, we would like to clarify some of the typical and often unwittingly held assumptions about access to education, make some observations in order to frame our discussion of the issue of access, and also establish our particular standpoint on the access debate (Bhola, 2002a). In establishing our standpoint, we shall provide criteria for judging the adequacy of the current conditions governing access to education, and project a future scenario for fair and just (Rawls, 1971) access to education in the context of globalization. Hence the following.

More often than not, access to education means access to “formal” education provided through primary and secondary schools—and higher education in countries where near-universal secondary education has already been achieved. By not including in our concerns the project of access to education of adult men and women (bypassed or ill-served by formal schooling and now in need of out-of-school education in order to be

able to participate in the economy and politics of their communities and nations), the whole enterprise of access to education becomes a venture limping on one leg. Under the prevailing conditions, formal schooling of children has a tremendous advantage over adult education in any form. While the village school has come to be as institutionalized as much as the village church or mosque, or the community temple, examples of institutionalization of the delivery of adult education are hard to find. By another irony in the history of adult education, the introduction of the term “adult learning” in place of “adult education” has resulted in the withdrawal of states and nonstate organizations from their adult education projects—leaving it to adults somehow to become “self-directed learners,” to pursue on their own their personal educational agendas as adults.

There is another wrinkle in the access to education debate. Access to education is not only access to “formal education,” but it is also in fact—and almost always—access to “formal education in the Western mode” provided in schools and universities first established by the European colonizers and then continued in their initial form during our times. Some adult education is provided in workplaces to professionalize labor for the modern sector of the economy. Nonurban areas of the subsistence economy have no access to any kind of education for their adult workers, male or female. Extension services that used to fulfill some of the educational needs of the masses in rural areas have now been decimated.

Globalization, we maintain, is both the context and the condition of all education today, all around the world. Globalization cannot be undone, but it must be redone. An International Labor Organization (ILO) Expert Group recently concluded that the current path of globalization must change. Too few from the developing world have shared in the benefits of globalization. Too many in this world have no voice in the design of globalization or any influence on its course. Everywhere, globalization has widened the social divide (World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization/ILO, 2004). Globalization must be reinvented to have a “human face” (UNDP, 1999) and must be made to serve all people, both in the developed and the developing world. Concomitantly, we realize that globalization-as-reinvented, were it to come to pass and were it to serve the people of the world, would still need the Western models of education, which are already fully entrenched in all nations, all around the globe.

Consequently, educational systems must be expanded to include access by children, youth, and adult men and women to all types of education and at all levels, delivered formally or nonformally. The content and structures of the educational systems must be made to serve the modern economy, as well as traditional economies. The new education we envision must also serve those living in subsistence economies by successfully disseminating modern knowledge and intermediate technologies among the traditional

communities. Indigenous knowledge alone cannot provide all the knowledge needed for development in today's world. A systematic dialectic between modern and traditional knowledge must be set in motion to the mutual enrichment of both (Bhola, 2002b).

Hunger is the deprivation most acutely felt by human beings. For success in access to education, the attempt has been made to combine both schooling for children and education for adults with the teaching of economic skills and ultimately with income generation. Failure has been more frequent than success in efforts of joining vocational skills with education, and vocational education with income generation. The reason is that, while necessary, education is not sufficient for income generation. The more important component of income generation (and poverty alleviation) is structural—changing the political and economic structures that keep the poor poor.

Finally, there is also the question of redefining development itself. The abject poverty of some 2.8 billion people today living on US\$2 a day must be alleviated. But poverty alleviation among the abjectly poor and the hungry should not mean increasing their appetites and pushing them into higher and higher levels of material consumption. While the ethics of frugality is taught at the individual and community levels, developing societies must also accept the limits of growth (Meadows et al., 1972) and must refuse to follow the bankrupt economic models of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which continue to work at cross-purposes with the objectives of sustainable development. Developing nations must learn to work with endogenous models of development (Michaelis, 2004) that are not doctrinaire but pragmatic and contextualized.

3. ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Access to education has always been an issue. During the last half-century, as more and more Western colonies gained their independence, the issue of access to education came to be central to the overall project of planned socioeconomic development, modernization, and democratization of Third World nations. Historical and social analyses made the injustices and disparities in the structures of access to education transparent both in the old colonizing states and in their erstwhile colonies, which had now become independent states.

In the first flush of enthusiasm, access to education was seen merely as a matter of educational expansion—seeking to bring education to as many school-aged children as possible—and in some rare cases, also seeking to bring literacy or adult education to adult men and women who had been bypassed or underserved by school systems. It was soon realized, however, that expansion of access inevitably became bound up with the exclusion or

inclusion of particular groups of learners and that the statistical expansion was at the same time also a structural intervention.

Things were, more or less, just fine in the West. The old colonizing countries of the West were entering the “postcolonial” period (or the “neo-colonial” period, as some would say), claiming that colonialism never ended but merely assumed a new form—enjoying 500 years of political, economic, scientific and technological ascendance. In spite of the exhaustion from World War II, the West was already the world’s center of military power, as well as the center of knowledge production both in the social and scientific domains. Western countries’ per capita incomes and life expectancies were among the highest in the world, and their rates of illiteracy and infant mortality were the lowest in the world. They had universalized primary education, and in most developed countries secondary education was universally available and made use of. In the United States, 50% of the college-age students were actually attending some form of college. It was not a perfect picture, however. Education of the “old slaves, now new citizens” had many problems (Arnez, 1978; Obanya, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Walters, 2001), as did the education of immigrants, both legal and illegal. Disparities rooted in race, gender, class, caste, and language have yet to be fully eradicated (Willis, 1983; Stash and Hannum, 2001; United Nations, 2001b,c; Wiley and Ricardo, 2002).

By comparison, in the non-West the problems of access to education were even more formidable (see Tables 3-1 and 3-2). Most of the newly independent countries were educational wastelands at the time of their emergence from their former colonial status (UNESCO, 1999).

Table 3-1. Estimated number of adult illiterates and distribution by gender and by world region, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

Region	1980	1990	2000
World	Male/Female	Male/Female	Male/Female
	880 million	882 million	876 million
Southern Asia	M 37%, F 63%	M 36%, F 64%	M 36%, F 64%
	345 million	389 million	429 million
Eastern Asia/Oceania	M 40%, F 60%	M 39%, F 61%	M 37%, F 63%
	277 million	233 million	185 million
Sub-Saharan Africa	M 32%, F 68%	M 30%, F 70%	M 27%, F 73%
	126 million	138 million	142 million
Arab States	M 40%, F 60%	M 39%, F 61%	M 39%, F 61%
	56 million	63 million	68 million
Latin America/Caribbean	M 38%, F 62%	M 37%, F 63%	M 36%, F 64%
	44 million	42 million	42 million
Developed countries	M 44%, F 56%	M 44%, F 56%	M 45%, F 55%
	29 million	17 million	11 million
	M 28%, F 72%	M 33%, F 67%	M 38%, F 62%

Source: UNESCO (1999).

Table 3-2. Gross enrollment ratio (GER) in primary education (weighted averages).

1990/1991	GPI total	Male	Female	F/M
World	99.5	105.7	93.1	0.88
Countries in transition	91.7	91.8	91.6	1.00
Developed countries	104.6	104.6	104.6	1.00
Developing countries	99.4	106.6	91.8	0.86
Arab States and North Africa	80.4	89.7	70.8	0.79
Central and Eastern Europe	101.8	103.9	99.6	0.96
Central Asia	87.1	86.4	87.8	1.02
East Asia and the Pacific	116.8	119.9	113.5	0.95
Latin America and the Caribbean	104.3	105.4	103.1	0.98
North America and Western Europe	105.4	105.4	105.3	1.00
South and West Asia	91.7	104.2	78.4	0.75
Sub-Saharan Africa	77.5	86.7	68.3	0.79

Source: UNESCO (2002: 244–245).

4. THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN EDUCATIONAL ACCESS: FROM STATISTICS TO STRUCTURES

Even a cursory review of the relevant educational statistics would indicate that, to begin with, “expanding” access to education would be the right and urgent national focus of educational policy. “Education is Development!” it was declared. However, by the 1970s it had become clear that the question of access to education was not merely statistical; it was also structural. Opening more and more new schools mattered—indeed, access to education continues to be reported as a statistic of school enrollments in national and international data banks. But it mattered even more where those schools were located, and what classes, castes, genders, and publics they were to serve. It also mattered what levels of education were offered in particular locations and how those new schools were interfaced with institutions of general and technical higher education elsewhere in the community, region, or country. Finally, what were the contents and quality of curriculum and of teaching in those schools? What local and global futures were being envisioned within the institutions of education and what values were being transmitted to those who passed through those institutions?

5. THE CHALLENGE OF ACCESS IN THE NEW CENTURY

The challenge of the new century is to expand access, while dismantling existing structures of exclusion and discrimination and, at the same time, reconstructing a new order of educational access to education—which

would simultaneously serve the interests of individuals, collectivities, and societies and states in the context of social justice, thereby serving the cause of prosperity and peace within, between, and among the nations of the world (Osborn et al., 1997; Armstrong et al., 2000). In what follows, we shall expand upon the language of our discourse (Chimombo and Roseberry, 1998) while offering a descriptive analytical model for promoting educational access that can organize the discourse for social justice.

5.1 An operational model for promoting educational access

An effective model for the promotion of educational access should include an examination of access as linked with retention and subsequent success, one sensitive to the multilayered context and to the complexity of existing social conditions in which segments of populations struggle to achieve their goals in life and work (see Figure 3-1).

We begin by recalling that it is necessary to beware of the “grand narrative,” which is replete with dangers. There is no one true answer to what is to be done here. While a consensus of values may exist among stakeholders at higher levels of discourse on how to expand educational access, as well as on general principles about how to manage the means–ends calculus, solutions will nevertheless have to be reinvented within particular contexts and under particular conditions at a particular time and in a particular place. These contextualized solutions will be colored by the standpoints of the particular agents and agencies involved in planning and implementing strategies to promote access to education. The commitment and competence levels of those engaged in these processes will also influence both the design of strategies of access promotion and their implementation. In cautioning against the lure of grand narratives, we do not wish to suggest that contexts should be reduced to the smallest social organization or only face-to-face communities. Depending upon the commonalities existing within communities, subcultures, and cultures, contexts will have varying boundaries. Our warning is simply the search for formulaic

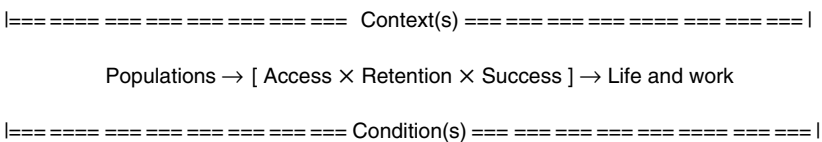


Figure 3-1. Skeleton of a general operational model for promoting access to education.

solutions informed by untenable generalizations. Instead of “generalizations,” “insights” from other contexts should be borrowed and applied in new settings so as to reinvent solutions (Bhola, 2000, 2001, 2003).

6. GLOBALIZATION AND THE NECESSITY OF REGLOBALIZATION: FOR SERVICE TO ALL ON THE GLOBE

Globalization today has come to be the most significant outermost layer of the context for all serious reflection and purposive action around the world—influencing choices and actions of individuals, institutions, and societies, in countries large and small, in both developed and developing areas of the world. The word “globalization” seems to carry an aura of one-worldness, one humanity on Spaceship Earth, with a shared vision of a shared future for the common good of all. However, that vision of globalization lies in a very distant future. In the immediate present, globalization is a muddle of multiple worlds of discordant realities, bound together by the manipulation of markets, and corporate media using the magic of new technologies, which are capable of creating mega fantasies (O’Meara et al., 2000; United Nations, 2002a–c).

The center of power of globalization is located within the Western world, and most Third World countries have been pushed to the periphery—as “weak states” unable even to exercise their sovereign right to make independent policies in the domains of politics, economics, culture, and technology.

Globalization as we know it today is both old and new. It is old in the sense that it is a continuation of the objectives and structures of the Western colonization of the world, which have been in play for several hundred years, followed by the Western neocolonization of new nations during the latter half of the twentieth century. Globalization is new in the sense that the spectacular advances in Western science and technology, and consequently in telecommunication and transportation, have effected a virtual annihilation of time and distance, leading to an acceleration of world history and an intensification of processes (economic, social, cultural, and political) within, between, and among nations. The political economies and cultures of the Third World have been integrated into the global order in helpless subordination.

Recent description and critique of the condition of globalization in today’s world point out that the current system is morally unconscionable and even functionally untenable. More than one billion people in this world live on US\$1 a day, whereas CEOs of American corporations are given annual salary bonuses in billions of dollars. While Americans spend

millions each year on dealing with obesity, 30 million people die every year around the world of starvation. It is quite clear that this is not a situation that dependent nations can simply walk away from; indeed, the West first has to let them go—loosen its stranglehold and create political and economic conditions under which globalization can begin to serve everyone on the globe.

The foregoing statements echo those that Rau (2002), President of the Federal Republic of Germany, made in his “Berlin address” on May 13, 2002, where he noted that:

- Forty percent of the world’s population live in the poorest countries; their share of world trade is less than 3%.
- In contrast, over three-quarters of world trade is conducted by just under 16% of the world’s population.
- Thirteen percent of the world’s population lives in Africa, but they have only 0.3% of all Internet connections.

Globalization is not as global as it is sometimes made to seem, and it has indeed fragmented the world into the superrich and the absolutely wretched. Understandably, one of the important roles and obligations of Third World educators in promoting “reglobalization” is to make the structures of globalization transparent, help the masses to become aware of how those structures are currently victimizing them, and then teach them how to act on their own behalf. It is thus a significant task for adult education (Knox, 1993; UIE, 1997; Bhola, 1998; Indabawa et al., 2000; UNESCO, 2000; Lauglo, 2001; Torres, 2002).

6.1 The simultaneous necessity of reorienting development

As should be clear from the foregoing, globalization is also a theory of socioeconomic development. Borne by the neoliberal ideology of “market over politics” and free market without social responsibility, development under globalization has led to a world governed by “profit over people”—dispensing altogether with the whole idea of culturally rich, humanistic societies that live in peace, advance the grand project of civilization, and fulfill the destiny of humankind.

In its concrete manifestations, development under globalization has brought about a transfer of wealth from poor to rich nations, and from poor people within nations to their rich compatriots; technology has created environmental disasters and widespread displacement among laborers struggling to eek out a living; the state has withdrawn from education and health services; and people unable to buy those services are left without them.

In developing countries, development is development of the so-called modern sector, often a small urban fringe that performs a subordinate role in the larger global—not always free—market, which is controlled by the

West. Aspirations for the welfare state and community development have vanished from development discourse while those living in informal subsistence economies in rural and semiurban communities have sunk ever deeper into poverty.

6.2 Dialectic between the external and the internal: current contexts and conditions

Globalization is an overwhelming and overriding force, and resistance to it would have required both wise leadership and shared sacrifices from the nations most affected. The history of the last half-century shows a lack of both, particularly in the Third World, where the governing elite—out of either ignorance or corruption—have cooperated with the forces of globalization, abandoning their people to poverty while exploiting national resources so that they themselves could rise to levels of material wealth and consumption on a par with Europeans and live like kings.

Although independence had been won from the colonizers in the name of the people and national constitutions had promised to establish representative democracies in the newly independent states, in reality the political culture neither allowed true representation of nor any democratic life for the people. In fact it was more likely for there to be cruel exploitation of the poor by the rich, insensitivity to gender justice, and a complete lack of concern for eradicating hunger and ignorance in most of the developing world. To let the sleeping dogs lie, adult education was neglected so that adult men and women could continue to move about in stupor of ignorance. In too many places, competition for power has become violent, so much so that civil strife has raged through the countryside and genocide and ethnic cleansing continues (Huntington, 1993; United Nations, 2001b).

It follows that regarding globalization, as well as development, educators have a challenge to lay bare the assumptions and architecture of development as it is practiced and teach people to demand an alternative model of development that serves the interests of all people (Sen, 1999; United Nations, 2001a, 2002 a–c; Fairness in a Fragile World, 2002).

7. THE CULTURE AND STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION

The educational system is simultaneously the context and the precondition that will determine the strategy for dismantling and reconstructing patterns of access to education.

It is too often forgotten that, almost without exception, formal educational systems in the Third World were established by the colonizers in the image of formal education back home in the metropolis. The internal organization of education, the curriculum and texts, and the language of instruction (except in the first few grades of primary schooling in some colonial contexts) all came from the metropolis. These transplanted educational institutions were, more often than not, poor imitations of the originals in the metropolis and were riddled with distortions that came from using the Western liberal educational model to train colonial subjects for compliance and subordination.

It is also often forgotten that the colonial educational systems the Third World inherited have not undergone any true transformations. Some changes have been made: for example, the languages of instruction in the primary schools generally have been changed, though not always; new social studies texts have been developed and introduced; textbooks on history, anthropology, sociology, economics, and politics increasingly reflect national content, though even now such content is viewed and interpreted through Western theoretical lenses and local history and institutions are often trivialized.

The current model of education in the Third World is reinforced by the frames and forces of globalization, which have very nearly succeeded in establishing a new division of labor in the globalized world, with knowledge-based high-paying jobs in developed countries and low-skill, service, and assembly jobs in developing countries. The educational implication of this new division of labor is that the Third World does not need much more than basic education for the preparation of its low-skilled laborers and, indeed, cannot really afford to become a knowledge-producing, knowledge-using region.

In our times globalization has affected, both directly and indirectly, matters of access by not legitimizing or funding particular sectors of education. Led by the World Bank, the world development assistance community half-heartedly called for adult literacy and basic education for all adults, but when the chance came, quickly withdrew from such endeavors. The whole of the developing world followed suit. The only sector of education that development assistance agencies seem to have promoted as a matter of basic policy is primary education for children and youth. Further, it is commonly maintained that this basic primary education should be vocationalized. Nine years of education has become the magical number: for at 15 years of age those who have been chosen for secondary (and later perhaps higher) education can stay in school and those who want to enter the workforce will have learned enough to follow instructions from supervisors and to tend to the machines. As indicated above, the globalized world is working towards a division of labor among nations such that most Third World countries will become providers of cheap labor to the rich countries. The role of education has come to be that of the low-level professionalization of cheap labor.

It was quite another historical time entirely back when education was defined as an opportunity for personal growth and development—intellectual, ethical, spiritual, social, cultural, and functional. In today's world, education is first and foremost utilitarian—everything else is incidental. Education nowadays is universally justified as an instrument for the socioeconomic development of a nation. That would make sense if the model of development adopted for a particular nation were indeed appropriate to the context and condition of that nation, and thus if an appropriate educational system with the right curriculum objectives and structures of delivery were developed and implemented.

As already noted the Western free-market, neoliberal model of development is inappropriate for most Third World countries since it largely serves the interests of a small aristocracy while neglecting the poor and the poorest of the poor in informal subsistence economies. The political elite from Third World countries attend international summits, seminars, and conferences on sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and education for all, but do little for their people once they are back home from their trips.

The educational systems that are in place do keep a small portion of the formal economy going, but even here things are going downhill as the state withdraws from its responsibility to provide public education. Schools stay closed as civil wars and ethnic conflicts rage across a country. The World Bank's structural adjustment policies have provided cover to states to withdraw from their responsibility to provide at least basic education for all children. University education has languished in most Third World countries. Only the rich can buy good education from private academies at home and universities abroad. The middle classes struggle as they spend half their income on private school tuition for their children, since they otherwise would learn nothing from state schools, which have been allowed to stagnate. Too many children are too poor to go to school at all.

Development, of course, is not kid stuff. It presupposes critical engagement, that one understands social, political, and economic structures, interrogates and resists them when appropriate, and suggests and demands changes. Development is a task and challenge for adults—male and female—who are already involved in politics, the economy, and the culture, and who do all that falls under the rubric of development if given the chance. The aforementioned critical engagement requires a tremendous amount of knowledge capital, as well as social and political skills, which have to be taught and learned in adult education settings. Where there are high rates of illiteracy, adult literacy will have to serve as the spearhead for adult education programs aimed at preparing adults to participate in the processes of initiating appropriate development and actualizing it in their lives. Ironically, however, adult literacy and adult education have been slowly and steadily strangulated—all around the world.

7.1 Promoting meaningful access to education: what can the educators do as professionals and as activists?

After reviewing contexts and conditions of access, we now move to those aspects and components of educational systems which educators can do something about as they seek to dismantle existing systems of access to education and reconstruct new ones.

7.2 Understanding complexities of education and access to education

Education at its core is about constructing knowledge and transmitting it both intra- and intergenerationally. Knowledge is power. Indeed, particular patterns of access to education in a society create a corresponding set of power relations and, in turn, concomitant distributions of economic, social, and cultural goods, education being one of those social goods. In this way educational access is bound up with social justice. The interconnections between access to education and social justice, however, are neither direct nor unidirectional and deterministic, but are full of ambiguities and complexities.

7.3 Complexities of education

Education itself is not easy to define or delineate. A whole set of questions arise that have no clear and simple answers. Should education be defined from the point of view of individual growth and individual returns, or from the perspective of social returns to create quality of life for all citizens, and wealth and power for nations? How might these two purposes, individual and social, be combined to create a just social order? Should education include both school education and out-of-school education, both general and specialized? Should the goals of accessibility include adult literacy and basic education for all, on the one hand, and higher education for all, on the other? And what about the quality of education? Should not education be both relevant and of high quality if it is to be worthy of being accessed?

There are questions that need to be answered first, however, before addressing the foregoing. Education, as we indicated, is about constructing and distributing knowledge, but whose knowledge is being processed by educational systems? In this age of globalization—when all formal schooling in all nations of the world follows Western models of schooling and teaches a “nontraditional,” Western body of knowledge, codified more often than not in a foreign language—what does all this do to traditional systems of knowledge and how does all this affect access to education by

those who do not belong to the select community of speakers of the metropolitan languages? (Bhola, 2002b).

7.4 Elaboration of educational access

Educational access itself is not easy to define. Is access the same thing as availability? Does access have to be equal for all or should it be equitable? Do we seek equality of opportunity to access or equality of results from accessing education? Is access a statistical category—possible to express as a percentage—or is it a structural category, sensitive to ethnicity, class, and economic means, as well as gender, disability, and language? Finally, there is the inevitable question of intelligence and aptitude. Natural endowments vary within populations—though definitely not between social groups. All members of a social group or small or large community may not be able to take advantage of access to various disciplines and levels of education offered by its society. How does one reconcile biological (physical and mental) endowments, which accrue through accidents of birth, with (equal or equitable) educational access? Accidents of birth also have consequences for access to success in another important way. Newly born children who “choose their parents well”—that is, are born to educated parents—come to inherit tremendous knowledge and cultural capital, and thereby become beneficiaries of the phenomenon of “social reproduction” (Willis, 1983).

7.5 Partners in expanding access

An important tenet of neoliberal politics is supply-side economics. When applied to education, it translates as improving access to education by increasing the supply of education. Historically, education has been public education. But neoliberals want to break what they call “the monopoly of the state” and to increase the supply of education through nongovernmental stakeholders and, more important, through privatization—which means bringing private capital into education for profit-making, which ostensibly will be to the benefit of both the learner and the purveyor of teaching–learning experiences. There is also the related assertion that by bringing in competing stakeholders to supply education (thereby expanding access) public education will be forced to perform better than it does now (Ball, 1993). Indeed, the claim is made that whatever education is being provided by public institutions, it is by definition stale and stagnant. This ideology, while it emanated from the North, has already taken hold in the South as well, and in fact as part of the general frames and forces of the dialectic between the North and the South.

The consequences of increasing the number of suppliers of education by bringing in non-governmental actors and private profit-making corporations

are already there for all to see. With state resources being withdrawn from public education, institutions of public education are indeed fulfilling the prophesy of doom. On the other hand, privatization of education is unable to serve public interests; instead, it merely privileges the well-to-do, who can now buy the best from elite schools and universities.

Several ameliorative strategies have been suggested to redress the resultant imbalances, which are too obvious to deny or neglect. One is the voucher system, whereby children, irrespective of class or parental income, can move from a failing public school to a private school and take with them a voucher of value equal to the money that their particular school district would have spent on each student.

Under present neoliberal regimes, access is supposed to be expanded through what are called partnerships with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. It is claimed that by introducing competition into the delivery of education, expansion can be combined with quality. To ensure access to all those who want to go to a better school, a voucher system is proposed. Early returns on these initiatives are not good, however. The introduction of NGOs and private entrepreneurs into education has made mercenaries out of public school teachers, who have stopped teaching at the schools where they held jobs and now teach only in the teaching shops they themselves own and run after school. In the process, public school systems have been decimated.

7.6 Learner populations

Populations are not a simple heap of people; they live in social organizations linked with other social organizations in both horizontal and vertical relations (Rumberger, 1995; Osborn et al., 1997; Munns and McFadden, 2000; Stash and Hannum, 2001). Sociological analyses provide a critical picture of society and reveal the networks of power and powerlessness. They show that ideology generally guides decisions about which social groups and constituencies should be given special attention regarding access to education. Women and girls, for example, are the focus of attention almost everywhere in the world today. In India, the so-called scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, as well as other “backward” classes, are given special attention.

Too often educators turn a blind eye to the needs of adult men and women and to out-of-school youth who were bypassed by the formal educational system or were underserved by the system. It is essential that education walk on the two legs of formal education and nonformal education. Special attention should be given to programs for youth and adults. Adult literacy programs must be provided in every community in which there are illiterate people. Adult literacy should be connected with appropriate programs of adult basic education.

8. MAPPING AND MANAGING ACCESS: REQUIRING, RECRUITING, AND REJECTING

As we have suggested repeatedly, statistics concerning and structures of access to education must be treated in parallel. Educational administrators now have: available to them tested methods of “mapping” school locations so that children do not have to walk miles and miles to get to school and at the same time can choose locations that meet the efficiency criteria in the use of resources.

In some societies traditional forms of education may still exist—for example, Buddhist Vats, Hindu Temples, Catholic schools, and Muslim Madrasas. Due attention should be paid to building interfaces with those schools: here there may have to be a division between the secular and sacred curricula, or existing traditional schools could be persuaded to expand their role and teach secular curricula as well.

Opening more schools is not the only way to expand access, however. To increase better use of infrastructures, school systems must seek to consolidate schools, shorten school days, and combine all that with a multiple-shift system. Curriculum delivery may be accelerated by reducing the duration of a child’s stay in the school system.

The problems of access are not confined to the level of primary schooling. While schooling at the primary level is necessary, it is not always sufficient. Primary schooling must also serve as the pool for drawing learners to secondary schools and later to institutions of higher general and technical education. In other words, the shape of the educational pyramid will have to be kept in mind as strategies of access to basic education are worked out. Finally, the questions and subsequent plans for access to education must also relate to adult men and women (Knox, 1993; Kelly, 1995; Indabawa et al., 2000; Lauglo, 2001).

Clearly there will never be the case that every citizen will expect to go through education at the highest levels of the system. There are neither resources for doing so nor is there a demand for higher university education for all. The challenge really is to draw up rules and procedures by which those who have the natural capacity can indeed follow their interests in higher education, while those who cannot will join the workforce after receiving basic education.

It should be noted that no society today wants to put any limitations on access to elementary basic education. Indeed, several societies have established policies of free and compulsory basic education. It is only at secondary and higher education levels that filters are put in place, which are designed to include or exclude potential entrants into the system. Typical filters used are testing, interviewing, and counseling students to take up a

vocation or enter the workforce. The modern school has rightly been called “the great sorting machine.” Some applicants may not be admitted to subjects they wish to study; some may dropout; others may be pushed-out; some are sorted into vocational subjects and polytechnics. On the positive side, the issue of affirmative action has changed the lives of many minority members who otherwise would never have had a chance to gain access and later success in life and work. It is important to ensure that the educational pyramids of nations are designed to serve the needs of a country under the particular prevailing circumstances. While meeting immediate national needs, they should also endeavor to create educational pyramids that are built on the foundations of social justice (Arnez, 1978; Darling-Hammond, 2000).

The discussion of access to education is differentiated into three main categories: (a) basic education (the norm is primary education lasting 8–9 years in the South, and higher secondary education in the North); (b) higher education (graduate and postgraduate education, both general and technical); and (c) adult and lifelong education, a residual catch-all category for all those who are interested in learning something at the level of their choice, with or without certification.

There is now general agreement that the universalization of basic education for children and adults should be an accepted policy goal. At the level of higher education, it is understood that universalization is impossible: neither all individual citizens would merit it or want it, nor would societies be willing to invest in this impossible utopia.

It may be both sensible and possible to pursue lifelong education. It is sensible because it is focused on appropriate education in response to the felt needs of individuals, groups, or institutions. It is instantly usable. There is a problem, however. Lifelong education is an idea, not an institution. Thus it will not take hold unless new institutional frames are created to bring together existing educational organizations and mechanisms, while also creating new institutions and networks where none seem to exist (UIE, 1997; UNESCO, 2000; Torres, 2002).

8.1 Requiring and attracting

Opening schools and expanding spaces and seats is not enough. Learners must be required or attracted to attend through various systems of incentives and disincentives. For example, primary education is compulsory and universal in societies that are developed or are in transition. Some historically disadvantaged groups may be offered “affirmative action” regarding admissions, scholarships, and even jobs at the end of their educational cycle. Affirmative action on behalf of minorities and women in the United States, and quotas on behalf of women and weaker classes of society in India—scheduled

tribes, scheduled castes, and other “backward” classes—have been established in education, work, and local and federal governmental structures.

Affirmative action has its own complexities. In North America affirmative action has been praised by liberals and denounced by neoliberals and those with entrenched self-interests who have equated it with quotas and declared it unconstitutional. In India affirmative action (called “proportional representation”) has indeed become a quota system. It has not been challenged per se in India, but the system has encouraged the various classes to agitate to have their own quotas. Nothing seems to be left for those who cannot claim a quota for themselves.

8.2 Schools as living systems

Schools are not just brick and bamboo edifices. Once they are occupied by teachers, learners, administrators, and visitors from the communities, schools become living systems. As such they come to be places to practice freedom, congenial or restrictive, exploitative and corrupt.

Learners coming from traditionally weaker groups in India, for example, often have had difficulties with other learners and teachers. Access is, of course, only a cruel hoax if those selected under affirmative action plans are then abandoned within the confines of the system, which was designed essentially for the middle classes. Girls may be bullied out of school or forced to leave for such reasons as lack of toilet facilities. They may also be sexually harassed and abused. Both girls and students from excluded classes must be socialized in the role of the educated intelligentsia; they must be assigned peers and mentors; and they must be helped with instructional assistance whenever necessary (Furlong, 1991).

8.3 Schools as knowledge systems

While school under a tree may be the only choice in some extreme settings, this should not be allowed to become a quick and easy choice. Schools should be well built, and seating arrangements should be comfortable and culturally sensitive. Both classrooms and libraries should be well provided. Needless to say, there should be a sufficient number of well-trained teachers to perform the instructional tasks.

9. FROM SCHOOL TO LIFE AND WORK

To achieve all of the foregoing suggestions, it will be necessary to conceive of education broadly and design a system in which there are many possible routes to success. Learners within the system must be educated to succeed

in ways more than merely academic. Gardner (1983) has talked of nine kinds of intelligence, of which academic intelligence is only one. A learning society that wishes to create lifelong learning for all must devise an educational system that will accommodate the cultivation of more than one of the nine kinds of intelligence.

In more concrete terms, learners must be either prepared to enter life and the workforce if they are not willing or able to proceed to higher levels of education or readied to enter higher levels of academic work if they are continuing with their education.

9.1 Opening the floodgates of access for success

Let us recall the wise words spoken by President Nyerere of Tanzania when he introduced the First Five-Year Development Plan (1964–1969) to his country (cited in Bhola, 1984: 138):

First we must educate adults. Our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten, or even twenty years. The attitudes of adults . . . on the other hand, have an impact now. The people must understand the plans for development of this country; they must be able to participate in changes that are necessary. Only if they are willing and able to do this will this plan succeed.

To succeed, then, it is necessary to redress the imbalance between formal education for children and nonformal education for adults. We do not wish to suggest, of course, that to overcome the imbalance of centuries we should now close schools and put all our educational resources for the education of adult men and women. What we do suggest, however, is that in-school education for children and out-of-school education for adults should get equal attention in the form of resource allocations, recruitment and selection of leadership, mobilization of learners and training of teachers, and the institutionalization of arrangements for the delivery of adult and lifelong education (Bhola, 1989, 1995, 1998, 1999a).

10. PLANNING AND RUNNING PROGRAMMED CAMPAIGNS

Governmental and nongovernmental organizations should join hands in running adult education (and adult literacy) campaigns so as to more effectively use mobilization strategies to bring people into adult education programs and projects. After the period of initial mass mobilization and mass education, all campaigns should undergo a metamorphosis into systematically run programs and projects of continuing education, with teaching skills for livelihoods at the

core. We have in mind the Indian experience with the National Literacy Mission. Even though the imperatives of centralized control often suffocated the campaign at the field level and campaigns likewise died after initial enthusiasm due to a lack of systematic support from program headquarters, the National Literacy Mission's model—where the program was at the top and the campaign at the local level—was a general success (Bhola, 1999b; United Nations, 2001a).

10.1 Focusing on matters of life and death: HIV/AIDS

With this strategy of literacy promotion—which involves programming to systematize guidance and support, as well as campaigning at the field level to motivate and mobilize people to teach and to learn—some necessary and urgent themes must be addressed. HIV/AIDS is one such theme. Adult literacy/adult education programs should teach youth and adults to be aware of HIV/AIDS, understand it as a life-threatening medical problem, avoid it, fight it, and learn to live with it if it is already too late. Other progressive themes to be addressed in such programmed campaigning would be cultivating human solidarity above racial and religious differences, gender justice, earning livelihoods in various economic sectors from modern to subsistence.

10.2 Making a living where one lives

Today's macroeconomic processes tend to pull people from where they live and throw them into urban slums, where they are forced to do corrupt work in absence of honest work so as to keep body and soul together. Education needed to earn a livelihood in places where people are living will have to be highly contextualized and personalized. In such nonformal and informal settings, the problems of access to education and work as typically formulated and discussed will not apply.

10.3 Peace education and tolerance for other races

None of the great schemes will work within an atmosphere of hate and violence. As the delegates to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (United Nations, 2001b) pointed out again and again, these problems have been accentuated rather than ameliorated over the last few decades. Interethnic violence and religious fundamentalism is on the upswing. Nothing in education and development is likely to happen unless these monsters can be bottled up and buried for ever (Huntington, 1993).

10.4 Media and film appreciation

George Orwell's prophecies in his novel *1984* have by and large come true. Doublespeak has been substituted for common, clear, and functional speech. The mass media of film and television have played a terrible part in the miseducation of peoples. Common people cannot always break the spell these media have cast on them. Citizens need to understand the technology of mythmaking, which mesmerizes millions, and the political economy of media production.

10.5 Technology as an instrument of expanding access

With the spectacular advances in technology over the past decades, many have come to believe that there may be a technical fix for the problems of access. UNDP's *Human Development Report 2001: Making New Technologies Work for Human Development* (UNDP, 2001) makes a strong case for the use of technologies in education—as a ladder of access to education. Technology may be a blessing, but it is a mixed blessing. Often after the completion of pilot projects, governments give the job of technology to the private sector, which, while expanding access to education, must also generate its own profits. The rich can buy more education; the poor cannot afford it. Unless the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is part of the publicly supported public education and unless at the receiving end there are public places where the poor can go to access technologically delivered education without having to pay, it will not contribute either to access or to a just society.

11. THE DIALECTIC BETWEEN ACCESS FOR SUCCESS AND A JUST SOCIETY

First, how is social justice to be defined? Justice is by no means an alien concept to the societies of the South. All cultures—Chinese, Hindu, and Islamic—have elaborated concepts of justice. Too often these concepts are embedded in religious texts (see relevant references in Honderich, 1995). Western scholars have developed both sacred and secular concepts of justice. In the latter half of the twentieth century theories of justice have been operationalized, such as John Rawls has done in *The Theory of Justice* (1971, 1999). Can we work towards a universal moral consensus on the meaning of social justice? It will not be easy because we will all have to agree that we are accidental beings, acquiring race, nationality, and religion by accidents of birth. We will have to accept one God above all religions.

It is true that democratic access leads to a just society, but its dialectical opposite is even more true: a just society creates conditions for democratic access, which makes it possible for all to succeed. Present day discourse on access presupposes that educational resources in societies are scarce and that there is and will continue to be intense competition for the best education available, as well as that educational resources are inelastic. Conditions have been created in which education has come to be linked directly with income. The greater the divergences between educational credentials and the income levels connected with them, the greater will be the competition for credentialed education. To win in the processes of social reproduction, people will compete for disciplines and specializations in which they may not really be interested but must pursue because of the jobs and incomes attached with them.

Solutions are possible. Educational resources can be expanded by building smaller armies and less opulent homes and offices for the political elite and their functionaries. It is possible to develop a saner means of linking education with income, occupation, and privilege.

12. CONCLUSION

Once again: What is the relationship between educational access and social justice? Utopias have been imagined that make no reference to universal education. In antiquity, before educational systems came into being, there were discussions of a moral order and just society that was to be established by philosophers, philosopher-kings, prophets, and demigods. In our time, when democracy is a political goal and participation in both politics and the economy requires systematic education, the role of education in social justice cannot be doubted.

Was the introduction of Western education into the colonies an ill wind that did no good? This author does not believe so. To begin with, of course, the imposition of Western education coded and conducted in Western languages was not well-intentioned and, in hindsight, can be seen to have been ill-conceived and predatory in nature. The imposed model of education systematically discounted and destroyed the then-existing individual identities and collective knowledge of the dominated cultures. Yet through the dialectical processes of history, something ironic happened: indigenous cultures came to share Western knowledge that had taken centuries to discover, test, and systematize; and the West came to experience some philosophic and cultural perspectives that it had not developed on its own. Ultimately, it was through the use of Western knowledge that non-Western peoples were able to throw off the Western colonial yoke. So what is so regrettable about all that? What is regrettable are the personal, cultural, political, and economic

costs that millions of enslaved people had to pay over centuries—and continue to pay under the sway of globalization.

The challenge, as we said earlier, is to dismantle the present global order and construct a new one. Educators can play neither God nor Caesar. They are merely bit players in the grand drama of globalization. Indeed, educators are little more than an instrumental elite who, by playing their particular roles in special educational institutions, implement policies established by the absolute and the authorized elite above them (Bhola, 1972). The most important decisions regarding allocation of resources and the distribution of rights to teach, test, and award credentials are made by the absolute power elite and then authorized down the line. The slow but steady retreat of the state from its responsibility to provide public schooling for children is a decision made by the absolute elite. Privatization of education is a state decision. Allocation of state funding for various sectors and locations of education is a state decision.

That said, there is yet considerable leverage for educators to promote access to education—both in the statistical and structural sense. To stand by and do nothing at all would be betrayal. It is our duty as educators to be optimistic, and it is necessary for us to be activists on behalf of access to education on an equitable basis.

As educators we will have to have ideological clarity and be able to summon the courage to speak truth to power. We must understand the implications of national policies, plans, and strategies, as well as to show others in turn how those might influence patterns of educational access and social justice.

We need to understand that, in a very real sense, it is impossible to find the right pattern of access and achieve a perfectly just society. Individual capacities, on the one hand, and class interests of the powerful, on the other, will always make such a society impossible. Social reproduction will continue (Willis, 1983). While basic education can and should be made available to all, higher education and specialized training will always be a scarce commodity (Watt and Paterson, 2000). The challenge here would be to assure that the limited space in institutions of higher learning goes to the truly deserving. The effects of the accidents of birth can and should be neutralized through a combination of selection tests and merit scholarships.

As indicated above, access without excellence is meaningless. In this day and age, educational systems at all levels must assure that miseducation is forbidden, both in sacred and in secular settings; and the new curriculum must deal with the modern imperatives posed by AIDS and religious and political fundamentalism.

One last worry: It is about the enemy within! One cannot be sure that educational bureaucracies and educators will all be interested in succeeding in the expansion of educational access. There will be subversion from

within; there will be back-pedaling and misuse of policies and resources to do just the opposite of what the policies are intended to do (Lipsky, 1980; Meier, 1987).

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Chapter 4

CONCEPTUALIZING THE WIDENING OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION AS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Akpvire Oduaran

1. INTRODUCTION

The widening of access to education—as idea, principle, policy, and practice—has gradually become a tangential manifestation of social justice. That is the main “kernel of truth” that the whole of the present book aims to illustrate, both from the theoretical and the practical treatment of the subject. What we would like to propose in this chapter is that there can be no genuine economic and social development in the absence of a recognizable widening of access to education. Over the years, widening access to education seems to have fit well into what Todaro (1979) has defined as development, that is, a multidimensional process encompassing changes in structures, attitudes, and institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty (Todaro, 1979 cited in Onokerhoraye, 1991: 3–5). This is so because widening access to education is the result partly of the acceptance of changes in attitudes that had previously favored restricting access and partly of extensive efforts to promote equality, equity, and social justice for accelerated socioeconomic development, on both an individual and a societal scale.

In forging a link between the widening of access to education and social justice, one is obviously “fishing in troubled waters.” For the concept of social justice is itself highly controversial. The controversy stems from the fact that we no longer have, nor can we have in the foreseeable future, a generally accepted principle of social justice that is applicable in all contexts.

To provide a clearer sense of what we are after in this chapter, but also in this book as a whole, we must briefly explore the concepts of social justice and access, as well as the global contexts in which the widening of access to education is applied as social justice.

2. SOCIAL JUSTICE

The idea of social justice centers on the need to resolve conflicting claims. For example, there is a clear conflict between the claim to be upholding the principles of fundamental human rights while commodifying education and thus limiting access to education by the poor in our societies. That is why Onokerhoraye (1991: 4) contends that we see social justice more often as the result of applying just principles to conflicts that arise from individuals' and communities' quests for advancement, and principles that enable the social cooperation necessary for such advancement to be achieved. Thus, social justice, as a principle, is based on the concept and operations of the division of labor, which generally aims at increased production. And when production is secured, the question arises as to how its fruits can be redistributed equitably among those who came together to generate the community's wealth. It is for this reason that scholars, in the literature reviewed by Onokerhoraye (1991: 4), agree that the principles of social justice should:

1. apply to the division of benefits and the allocation of burdens emerging from the process of engaging in joint labor, and
2. relate to the social and institutional arrangements connected with the task of production and distribution.

In the present context, then, the principle of social justice would seem to require that education be distributed so as to enable access by everyone, everywhere, and at all times. Our concern here therefore is with a just distribution of educational access. But, some may ask, what do we mean by a just distribution of access to education? To answer this question we must wrestle with the whole idea of finding an ethical explanation of the basis for just distribution. This is a moral question that requires a moral decision-making process, which has been hotly debated by the likes of Rawls (1969, 1971), Harvey (1973), and Onokerhoraye (1991), each of whom has proposed criteria by which to assess the implementation of social justice as:

- equity,
- inherent equality,
- inherent rights,
- need,
- merit,
- contribution to common good,
- actual productive contribution,
- efforts and sacrifices, and
- valuation of services.

Though these criteria are not exhaustive in themselves, most nations have interpreted, analyzed, and applied them in their efforts to promote the widening of access to education as social justice. Even so, social justice has

joined the family of hotly contested concepts. As Akinpelu (1998: 9) has suggested, hotly debated or essential concepts are those that are capable of attracting many interpretations, each of which is as valid as the other, and are therefore subject to lengthy disputes. In the case of our topic here, some may question whether we should really be talking about limiting access to public education since it should be opened to everyone. To those who pose that question, it is obvious that no one has been denied access to education who shows academic potential for benefiting from education. They argue that education is provided as a public good since it supports national and individual development, but also that it does not matter much whether some financial burden is placed on anyone who seeks to access education, since nothing is really free. The nexus of the cash economy foisted on all of us even makes their argument more plausible. Furthermore, they argue that if social justice as equity operates within what Akinpelu (1998: 9) terms “the distributive realm,” wherein the resources to be shared are in short supply and therefore cannot satisfy the wants and needs of everybody, the whole idea should be dispensed with. Were that to happen, however, it is obvious to many that some segments of society would suffer considerably. And the prospect of such suffering helps to explain the vigorous movement that has brought together scholars and practitioners who argue that we must continue to widen access to education.

By and large, those championing the widening of access to education as social justice continue to base their arguments on the “qualitative concern” for equality, justice, and legality. Procedural justice enforces the idea that established rules and principles have been closely followed without placing anyone at a disadvantage for any reason. Those who favor this argument frequently appeal to fairness, compassionate consideration, and empathy, and are guided by feelings that are not fully reflected in the concepts of equality and justice alone (Akinpelu, 1998: 9). What they are in fact after is “reverse discrimination” or “positive” and “affirmative action.” Theirs is a rather technical and formalistic pursuit, which has met with criticism. For “reverse discrimination” is said to be equally discrimination. It is just that those who were previously favored are now discriminated against. The critics ask where social justice is if discrimination remains in play. They argue that since the application of social justice as a principle is not supposed to discriminate against anybody, we have no good grounds to discriminate against any individual or group of individuals. Instead of appearing “vindictive,” say the critics, it is better to allow anyone and everyone to have free access to whatever social services a particular society provides. That is why today many nations in the North and the South are seeking to widen access to education as part and parcel of their national development objectives, without any ideological or political strings attached. They do so not only because of their desire to promote national and individual development

but also in response to persuasive arguments in favor of social harmony, peace, belongingness, unity, social cohesion or integration, and solidarity. Thus, we must once again take up the goal of widening access to education as it has been understood and implemented globally.

2.1 Widening access to education

In times like these, when the nations of the world are increasingly interested in achieving global peace, it is easy to forget some of the major contributions towards the realization of that laudable goal. One of them, and in fact the one with which we are concerned here, is the effective promotion of the widening of access to education at all levels.

Access to education is still limited in many nations. There are yawning gaps between the demand for and the actual supply of education. Years of global concern and calls for widening access to education have yielded only limited results. In some cases, however, the forces, which together lead to a denial of access to education, have inadvertently shed light on the dogged predominance of social injustice in education. Prominent among these forces are globalization, gender inequalities, poverty, and, for most developing countries in Africa and Asia, the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Social injustice in education has been fought on many planes and by many leaders, some of whom have been politicians, though most have been academicians. In the West it is thinkers such as Erich Fromm and John Dewey who have led the fight against social injustice in educational access. While Western scholarship has continued to explore ideas espoused by such thinkers with a view to applying them to social policies on education, scholarship on contributions by Southern scholars to widening access has been either scarce or insufficiently highlighted in the literature. Despite the impact that scholars on both sides of the divide between the North and the South has had on widening access to education, their rich legacy has not been the subject of any sustained scholarly inquiry (Osborne et al., 2004). However, when scholars have attracted attention, they usually have been from the North. This has tended to conceal the fact that many scholars from the South have themselves had considerable influence on widening access to education and thereby on the achievement of social justice. It is high time that we reflect on the efforts of such scholars from the South. One is Michael Omolewa, who over the past four years has played a prominent international role in the politics of education and whose influence and relationships cut across the so-called North–South divide. It is this man, his spirit and his achievements that animate our reflections here.

2.2 Notions of access

Over the centuries education as a social service has undergone numerous transformations. For example, it has been transformed in terms of provision, viewpoint, and relevance:

- Rather than being provided mainly to the elite, education has come to be provided to the masses (this is what some call the “universalization of education”).
- The once prevalent, purely mechanistic view of education as instrumentalism has been replaced by a way of assisting people to be involved in the search for and application of ideas that can possibly lead to social, cultural, economic, and political transformation.
- While it once had little relevance to public policy, education has become the topic of heated debate.

In his research into the changing strategies for widening access, Boud (2004: 54) identified three major phases:

- *Access by patronage*: This refers to the days of the traditional elite universities when entry into school was decided by social standing or by patronage. Under this dispensation, children from poor homes who had academic ability were admitted through grace and favor. Interestingly, governments employed this approach when they provided scholarships to clever children from poor homes.
- *Access by “objective testing”*: In this phase the strategy was to resolve access issues through objective testing. The view was that, by adopting the system of “objective” testing through tests and examinations, it would be possible to achieve a wider distribution of potential learners in institutions of learning. Following this strategy, access to school was no longer a function exclusively of one’s socioeconomic status but of one’s academic ability. Thus, social class was no longer to pose a barrier. Tests remained the criteria by which individuals were admitted into schools and awarded scholarships. In the quest for fairness using this strategy, there was an increasing desire for aptitude tests and culture-free and experience-free tests, but the hope for bias-free tests which fueled that desire soon proved to be illusory.
- *Access for target groups*: This third innovation in the widening of access focused on target groups. It was based on the assumption that strategies emphasizing purely academic criteria, through the so-called objective testing or examinations, were seriously restrictive because they did not consider the disadvantage an individual may have experienced earlier on in the schooling process. By contrast, it was argued, a focus on target groups made it possible to ignore some people who were not that visible.

It was this third strategy that many governments seeking quick and easy solutions to the problem of inadequate access found most attractive. To improve on it, however, other strategies were employed:

1. Recognizing a wide range of entry qualifications.
2. Deliberately giving persons in the target groups easier entry into the tertiary level of education by adopting a formula that recognized educationally disadvantaged communities. For example, Nigeria introduced the strategy of admitting candidates from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds by deliberately lowering the so-called “cut-off points” for candidates from areas so designated; this was done in order to “bridge” the educational gap between northern and southern states. But this approach has been contested by some who see that formula as discriminatory and thus as an inadmissible introduction of injustice into the democratic framework.
3. Providing “access” or “bridging” courses to individuals from those target groups to make it easier for them to improve their academic skills and thereby acquire the qualifications necessary to enter higher education or some other level of education.
4. Providing financial incentives for institutions to recruit members of target groups.
5. Providing funding to institutions located where persons from disadvantaged populations live.

These strategies have influenced the widening of access in different countries with varying degrees of success. At the same time, the use of such strategies for widening access has also given rise to new challenges in some countries. In Nigeria, for example, it has been alleged that the preferential treatment of citizens from the so-called educationally disadvantaged states is discriminatory and indeed dangerous insofar as it encourages the recipients of such treatment to relax while their fellow citizens elsewhere have to work extremely hard to excel academically—though researchers have yet to provide any proof of the latter claim.

Beyond such arguments advanced in Nigeria, some contend elsewhere that gaining access is worthless at a time when funding is diminishing for existing schools and that those who have gained access are becoming increasingly frustrated and are being misled by providers. Some also argue that gaining access and eventually graduating, only to find that there are no jobs for qualified persons owing to “shrinking” economies and/or government mismanagement, makes the widening of access useless and indeed a waste of time, energy, and resources. Still others argue that, in those cases where one gains access to an institution of learning where the quality of the experience is negligible, the whole notion of access is worthless. And some argue that emphasizing quantity at the expense of quality will leave modern societies worse off than they were previously.

Despite the doubts about and criticisms of efforts to widen access, there are many other countries whose governments and people place much hope in the widening of access to education, specifically that such access will give rise to a highly qualified and skilled workforce that can adequately respond to the demands of expanding global markets and communities.

2.3 Moving beyond access

Some maintain that it is time to begin to move beyond access to education into other spheres. However, such a move would be unreasonable for many countries in the so-called developing world, which have yet to achieve an appreciable level of access even to primary schooling. On the other hand, those calling for a move beyond access maintain that it is necessary to assure economic justice so as to improve people's economic capacity to access available education. Others have sought to expand access by requesting increases in the funding of existing institutions and thereby make it possible for more potential learners to be admitted.

And there is still another demand being made these days: people are calling for a move beyond access and, instead, for the establishment of multi-racial institutions, for example, in the United States, as well as in South Africa and even the United Kingdom.

At the same time, demands are being made for a move from access to responsiveness, and from responsiveness to meeting individual needs so that we will no longer be "overwhelmed" by concerns about the effects of the mass production of graduates. Boud (2004) has been exploring the issue of responsiveness for some time now. He has identified several challenges associated with responsiveness, some of which are:

- Can we, technically speaking, meet at all times the changing goals of learners if we are fully committed to responsiveness?
- Is it possible simply to promote the concept of skilling in the absence of examining its differential, contextual, and conceptual bases?
- Do we understand the resources to which learners have access or even provide all the resources needed?
- Should we simply emphasize new knowledge demands instead of the transmission of knowledge by all groups in society?
- Can we pursue access and quality at the same time?
- Do the developing countries have what it takes to be part of the global widening of access, and, if not, are there sources of support for them in northern countries?

The extent to which particular countries can meet those challenges will differ, of course. Nevertheless, some are still concerned that the focus on access should be shifted to a pursuit of reduced costs of education. They

argue that instead of increasing fees—especially for higher education, as the United Kingdom did in 2004, for example—governments should seek to reduce fees so that people, especially children, from the lower socioeconomic brackets can increase their prospects.

There is much anguish in the South over what the developed countries are doing by raising fees. Foreign students are sometimes denied financial aid that would have been available to them in the past. There is also much consternation that the developed world has denied students from the developing world access to their countries' educational systems not only by increasing fees for foreign students but also by denying them visas, even when they can partly meet the requirements for the payment of fees. Thus, the debates continue from different perspectives. Everything would seem to depend on what side of the pendulum one is sitting on at any given point of time.

2.4 Broadening the scope of widening access

Despite the diverse challenges facing the widening of access to education as social justice, there has been some progress worldwide towards developing different methods for reaching out to more and more learners. One such method has been the use of open learning environments. They have been quite encouraging to off-campus or part-time learners in distant and disparate locations. Providers have served them with new technologies to facilitate either synchronous or asynchronous distance learning.

Open learning has also been enriched by the emergence of virtual universities. Tschang and Della Santa (2001: 3) have pointed out that a virtual university is actually a campus-less university that uses Internet technology as its main mode of delivery. While most virtual universities are currently operating within existing institutional boundaries (such as those defined by campus-based universities) and the human resources within them, many developing countries, especially in Africa and Asia, are still not sufficiently equipped to use this and other technologies and methodologies to widen access.

The predicament faced by African and Asian countries regarding the use of virtual universities is enormous. The extent of the problem is illustrated by the scarcity of effective digital libraries, which usually provide access to distributed information resources in support of virtual universities and other models for widening access to learning, instruction, and independent endeavors to locate information (Borgman, 2001: 207).

Apart from innovations in open learning and virtual universities, the Internet and information technology have proved very useful. They have facilitated the wholesale transformation of learning opportunities by increasing access to larger volumes and varieties of knowledge through the

promotion of online books, journals, and other venues. Furthermore, they have also helped to change how knowledge is created, represented, and disseminated, and to create virtual communities hitherto undreamed of in the developing world (Tschang and Della Senta, 2001: 17). The irony of these developments is that there is chronic lopsidedness in the availability and use of these technologies in the North and in the South. For example, the South continues to battle with a shortage of clean and safe energy to support the use of the Internet and other information technologies. This is in spite of the fact that the new technologies actually offer comparative economic advantages over traditional modes of delivery. Again, the widening of access is limited by many factors, even where a tool such as the Internet promises to revolutionize learning and learning environments.

2.5 Factors limiting the widening of access

Despite all the progress the world seems to have made towards widening access, there remain several factors that limit the widening of access to education as social justice. Such factors may be rooted in the programs themselves, the mode of delivery, the teachers, or the community. For example, the nature of available programs may limit access insofar as they do not meet learners' needs or do not help them to deal with the challenges facing them.

The limitations posed by this mode of instruction stem from the fact that residential programs usually require that learners have enough time and money and that the facilities provided can adequately meet the needs of everybody interested in learning. Yet this has not been the case, especially in the developing world, where the timing and location of the programs, as well as the lack of Internet access and information and communication technologies (ICTs), learning materials, and qualified teachers, pose enormous challenges.

The language of ICTs is still largely English. The use of other languages is slowly becoming more common, but it will be some time before non-English speakers in the developing world can gain first hand knowledge of developments that have taken, and are taking, place in ICTs.

Beyond the physical limitations posed by time, location, and ICTs, non-physical limitations are also crucial. For instance, it is important whether or not the learners' culture values learning. The much-discussed learning cultures and societies may not have much meaning to people who lack the urge to learn because they are preoccupied with surviving each day. On the other hand, wars and conflicts interfere with the desire to learn. Where there is social and political instability, learning can easily become a secondary or tertiary concern.

The widening of access to education may be circumscribed by each learner's situation. Some learners may face economic difficulties, so that even when access is provided at market costs it would mean very little to him or her. There are also potential problems connected with the learner's family, especially if it is large, and his or her health.

Be that as it may, many countries have sought to widen access to education for their citizens, albeit with varying results. In what follows, we shall survey some of the activities that have taken place in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Nigeria.

3. BRIEF GLOBAL CONTEXTS

3.1 The United States

For some nations, the widening of access to education is clearly anchored in their constitution, so that those in power cannot impose their personal beliefs on national policy and thereby abandon visions aimed at the measured achievement of the set goal. To illustrate this, let us consider the United States. Here access to education is a major pillar in the nation's constitution as it evolved from the Bill of Rights. To ensure that the goal of widening equal access to quality education is not blurred or abandoned, the United States has established the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within the US Department of Education. The OCR is a law enforcement agency charged with enforcing federal civil rights laws. According to its protocols, the agency enforces laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age in programs and activities that receive assistance from federal financial sources (OCR, 1996: 1). Among the laws that the OCR enforces are (OCR, 1996: 1–2):

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 [this law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin]
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 [prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex]
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 [prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability]
4. Age Discrimination Act of 1975 [prohibits discrimination on the basis of age]
5. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 [prohibits disability discrimination by public entities, including school districts, public colleges and universities, public vocational schools, and public libraries regardless of whether they receive financial assistance from federal sources]

These laws are quite elaborate and cover most educational institutions in the United States since most of them receive some form of federal financial assistance. Their enforcement begins with any complaint about discrimination lodged by the public.

A special feature of the attempt to widen access to education is that the US laws are accessible to anyone to examine, and they must be enforced by an established agency. Moreover, the laws are monitored and sometimes provoke debates, which in turn lead to reviews. More important, the federal government recognizes that a lack of access to requisite funds may pose another limitation and thus has put in place through Title IV student financial assistance programs, which was spelled out in the 1965 Higher Education Act (HEA). In July 1990, there was one such review of the effectiveness of student aid. It revealed that federal student financial assistance programs grew dramatically from US\$200 million in 1965–1966 to over US\$18 billion in 1988–1989 (US Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 1990: xii). The review also revealed that the increased student financial assistance encouraged unprecedented enrollment in America's postsecondary education institutions.

Financial assistance within the desire to promote equal access to education could be welcome news for learners from low-income, middle-income, and minority backgrounds. Yet the United States has not simply accepted inadequacies in government policies and programs. For example, the executive summary of the report of the US Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (2002: v) opened with a statement that alerted the nation to the fact that:

Most Americans believe that all students have the opportunity to earn a college degree through hard work in high school and college. Yet, this year alone due to record-high financial barriers, nearly one-half of all college-qualified, low- and moderate-income high school graduates—over 400,000 students fully prepared to attend a four-year college—will be unable to do so, and 170,000 of these students will attend no college at all.

For all that has been achieved in the United States through its laws and efforts, there are still obstacles to achieving the goal of widening access to education. Indeed, the report estimates that over the decade 2001–2010, 4.4 million high school graduates will not attend four-year colleges and another 2 million will not attend college at all, for many high school students are unable to meet the admission requirements of four-year colleges and still others who could pursue degree programs if they first enrolled in a community college are effectively blocked from doing so because of escalating fees. This is what is happening in just a minute section of America's public education system at the tertiary level.

3.2 The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has introduced foundation degrees as intermediate level qualifications that aim to enhance access to higher degrees. It has even gone farther to ensure that there is no discrimination against anyone on grounds of race, color, nationality or ethnicity, or language. That is what the UK Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 was supposed to achieve. Unfortunately, the Parliament is currently debating whether it should raise fees paid by higher education learners. Higher fees would affect learners in the United Kingdom and those from other countries who may wish to study there. Farrelly (2003: 1–3) has criticized the British government’s double-speak concerning the widening of access to education, arguing, for example, that higher fees would definitely restrict access to those who can afford it rather than to those who show themselves to be most able academically.

3.3 Nigeria

The universalization of primary education in Nigeria, which began with national action in 1977, has since generated an increase in the demand for secondary and higher education. However, Nigeria currently is unable to guarantee access to university education to nearly 65% of its citizens who are qualified for admission into existing universities, in which over 389,846 students are already enrolled (Omolewa, 2002: 118). This is in spite of what Omolewa (2002: 116–117) has documented as a remarkable increase in enrollment in the 17 federal, 26 state, and 4 private polytechnics, 36 agricultural colleges, 27 health science colleges and allied institutions, 20 federal, 39 state, and 5 private colleges of education, and 41 universities.

The story of widening access to education in Nigeria is not all that different from other developing countries, which show varying degrees of progress towards the achievement of full access to education even within their own educational systems.

4. CONCLUSION

The widening of access to education in most nations is anchored in the principles of social justice. While some nations—such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Nigeria—may embrace widening access to education much more warmly from different philosophical and ideological standpoints, others do so with notable caution. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find any nation that has overtly repudiated the idea of widening access to education.

How rapidly and effectively a nation plans and implements the widening of access to education may depend on a number of factors. For some nations, the demand for education could be overwhelming for different reasons. Moreover, a nation's philosophical or ideological orientation may compel it to seek to widen access to education with much vigor and to invest enormous resources in the pursuit and achievement of the goals of individual and national development. And in the nascent knowledge-based economy and society, it is unlikely that one will find a government that wants to abandon programs for widening access to education. Even when a government fails or is unable to widen access to education, whether for social or economic reasons, private initiatives may be allowed to flourish and complement public policies and programs aimed at widening access to education. That was the case in Japan after 1945.

In the foregoing we have sought to illustrate the simple but very important point that widening access to education as social justice is easier said than done, indeed that seeking to achieve that goal is an incredibly intricate and challenging process. While nations may have all the laws and financial programs and policies needed to achieve the goal of widening access to education as social justice, this remains an area of public policy and programming that is full of surprises. When such surprises do arise, only nations that are visionary, resolute, and ready to accept the challenges of ensuring the ideals of social justice, whatever the cost, will succeed in this era of the globalization and the cultivation of the knowledge society on which it depends.

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Chapter 5

EDUCATION, LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Brian Burtch

1. INTRODUCTION

Postsecondary education is widely hailed as an avenue of personal growth and emancipation, while law is often celebrated as essential to the protection of individual and group rights. Such positive imagery of these two social institutions is challenged by those working in critical frameworks such as feminism, postmodernism, and critical race studies (Burtch, 2003). In this essay, I reconsider the intersection of law and education in Canada, noting the removal of some historical barriers for excluded or marginalized people and discussing access-related developments in law and postsecondary education, including examples of where curricula and programming now promote diversity and widened access. Drawing on principles of social justice, and complemented by selected international examples, our focus here will be on emerging directions in education and law. The changing political, economic, and cultural landscape in Canada and worldwide requires educators to adjust and innovate.

2. COUNTRY PROFILE: CANADA

Canadian universities and other postsecondary institutions provide substantial accessibility, with one-fifth of young Canadian adults (18–25) enrolled in a course of study (Emberely, 1996: 3), and approximately 15% of the Canadian population having attended university (Bercusson et al., 1997: 186). In the postwar years, Canadian universities increased program selection and admissions, new institutions were funded, and some “two-year” colleges were accredited as universities or university colleges with degree-granting powers (Pocklington and Tupper, 2002: 27–28). Provision of more degree-granting institutions complements traditional university programs and, where transfer credit between institutions is established, increases access to postsecondary education (Burtch, 2002: 50–53). In general terms, Canadian

postsecondary education is administered by 10 provinces and 3 territories. The Canadian population is approximately 30 million, with about 90% of residents living in urban areas. Canada has 92 universities and 175 community colleges affiliated with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (Burtch, 2002: 48).

Access to education has attracted great controversy in Canada. For example, some argue that increased accessibility to postsecondary institutions generates lowered standards for admission and completion, thus embedding mediocrity in university programs and preventing any Canadian university from becoming “truly outstanding” (Bercusson et al., 1997: 47). Some credit “enrollment-based funding” with the trend towards ever-rising spaces and program development at Canadian universities, all in aid of increased government funding on a per space basis (Bercusson et al., 1997: 49). Others argue for even greater accessibility. Martha Piper, President of the University of British Columbia, has confirmed that demand for university spaces is at an unprecedented level, with many qualified applicants denied access. Unlike earlier times when a 75% high school average would assure entrance to UBC, the cut-off today is 82% and even higher for some programs (Piper, 2003). Prospective students face the hurdle of rising grade point average (GPA) criteria for admission and increasing tuition fees, well beyond annual rates of inflation. Canadian students from middle-income families are having considerable difficulty affording costs of university. A recent study by Statistics Canada has documented an increase in university attendance by students from lower-income families (gross family income under US\$25,000) and a decrease by students whose families grossed between US\$25,000 and US\$100,000 annually. Some critics suggest that current student loan guidelines rest on an exaggerated assumption of how much disposable income middle-bracket families actually have, which results in students from such families being deemed ineligible for student loan plans designed for poorer students (CanWest News Service, 2003).

Others have been critical of systemic barriers to education and social participation in Canada. John Porter’s landmark monograph, *The Vertical Mosaic* (1965), identified several sociological barriers to education, including “inequality of income and wealth” and regional disparities where some areas lacked ready access to accredited institutions (1965: 168). Canadian legislation authorized race-segregated schooling for a century—from the mid-1850s to the late 1940s, when legal prohibitions of such practices emerged. Racist practices permeated Canadian society, well beyond the establishment of some race-segregated schools, to include hospital admission, induction into military service, and hiring practices (Backhouse, 1999: 250–251).

Historically, access to higher education in Canada was restricted by social codes, which assured that university education was monopolized

by men, both as lecturers and students. A celebrated historical example involved a woman fighting successfully and against great odds for a B.A. (granted in 1890) and subsequently for entry into law school. Clara Brett Martin, known as “that girl graduate,” was the first female law student at the University of Toronto and the first woman called to the Ontario Bar in 1897 (Backhouse, 1991). Over a century later, critical scholars report widespread perceptions of gender bias in Canadian law firms, even as more and more women are enrolled in law schools and active in legal practice (Hagan and Kay, 1999; Brockman, 2001), and researchers lament the near-invisibility of minority women—women with disabilities, visible minorities, lesbians—in law schools (Banks, 1999) and the underrepresentation of women in senior positions in law schools in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (McGlynn, 1999).

3. CHANGING POLICIES IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EDUCATION

The emphasis on social justice involves a theoretical and practical approach to combat oppression, promote diversity, and overcome exclusion from basic resources, such as housing, employment, and basic or further education. Among its goals is social betterment through reduction of prejudice and discrimination in society. Aside from protections by law, many social critics have shifted attention to politics and social policy. For example, William Tabb (2001: 174) contends that neoliberal political agendas weaken public education systems, for example, in the United States, while other countries—such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, Canada—have focused on higher-quality, more accessible public education. Tabb credits the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights for helping people to learn about “fundamental civil, political and economic rights” and for serving as a platform to challenge neoliberalism and the hegemony of corporate power (Tabb, 2001: 202–203).

The American civil rights movement is a famous example of overthrowing unjust laws and widening access to education and many other institutions. This social justice movement challenged “Jim Crow” laws and customs, which preserved race-segregated schools, restaurants, and other facilities (Williams, 1987: 10), and promoted discussion of human rights and the role of government in expanding social opportunities, partly through affirmative action initiatives and school integration (Cairns and Williams, 1988). Landmark legal decisions complemented efforts to abolish

racial segregation. The 1954 US Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled public school racial segregation unconstitutional. Passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act signaled the end of formal segregation and employment-related discrimination. More recent rulings include the 2003 Supreme Court 5–4 majority decision in favor of affirmative action policies at the University of Michigan Law School (Civil Rights Movement Timeline, 2003). Following the Supreme Court’s split decision on *Bakke* in 1978 which supported “race-conscious admissions policies” to promote diversity while maintaining educational objectives, legal challenges, and public debates continue about affirmative action programs on campuses and in some cases these programs have been ruled unconstitutional and have been dismantled (Orfield and Whitla, 2001: 143). Even so, public attitudes in North America have undergone a sea change since the mid-twentieth century: for example, a mere 2% of whites in the South of the United States approved of interracial schooling in 1942, compared with 82% in 1982 (Orfield and Whitla, 2001: 171). These changes in public opinion and legal victories took place even as violence continued, evident in the murder of three civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964, the assassination of Malcolm X the following year, and the shooting of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968. Today there are concerns over the continuing *gap* in postsecondary attendance rates in the United States between white students and African-American and Hispanic-American students, despite gains in attendance rates for the latter two groups.¹

4. FIRST NATIONS IN CANADA: EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

“Education services administered by Indian Affairs did not build on First Nations traditional educational or governance practices; instead services were based on the federal government’s policy of assimilation” (Carr-Stewart, 2003: 227).

The First Nations in Canada—including status and nonstatus Indians, Métis (Indian and French heritage), and Inuit—are a dynamic part of Canadian history and contemporary change, including access to education. Their efforts to establish self-government and preservation of identities, customs, and livelihoods have gathered strength, yet much of their history

¹Only 1% of US law school students in 1960 were African-American, compared with 7.5% in 1995. Using another measure, between 1971 and 1998, the percentage of African-Americans with college degrees increased from 11.5% to 17.9%, while Hispanic-Americans increased from 10.5% to 16.5%. At the same time, white Americans holding degrees increased from 22% to 34.5% (Orfield and Whitla, 2001: 144).

has taken the form of what Walzer refers to as “conquered nations” (1997: 44). There is ample evidence of the damage caused by government and church policies geared to assimilation and religious conversion, including residential schooling whereby children were separated from their families, and indigenous languages were drummed out of them, replaced by either English or French.

The loss of one’s mother tongue and of traditional decision-making are among many losses experienced by Canada’s First Nations, including separation from family, policies of transracial adoption whereby thousands of aboriginal children were adopted by nonaboriginal parents, physical and sexual abuse by officials, and loss of land, traditional livelihoods and culture (York, 1990). For example, laws were enacted to banish aboriginal ceremonies including aboriginal dance (Backhouse, 1999). Resistance to assimilation occurred on many fronts, including self-determination in education. Early in the twentieth century, aboriginal leaders protested residential schooling and sought reserve-based schools where families could remain intact. Even so, it was only in the 1950s that the Canadian federal government shifted to provincial schooling and greater integration of native and nonnative students. This seemingly progressive shift still carried some elements of exclusion, with First Nations representatives denied access to school board posts (York, 1990). In 1974, a watershed event involved protest by the Ojibwa people and their boycott of provincial schooling where approximately 80% of students dropped out before graduation (York, 1990: 25). In Canada, socioeconomic disparities between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals persist today: in Saskatchewan, where approximately 13% of residents identify themselves as aboriginal (2/3 First Nations; 1/3 Métis), approximately 36% of First Nations adults are unemployed, compared with only 9% of the nonaboriginal adult population, and 47% of First Nations’ income involves social assistance, compared with 8% of nonaboriginal Saskatchewan residents (Carr-Stewart, 2003: 223).

The search for culturally sensitive curricula in a multicultural society has taken shape in many aboriginal communities. Agbo (2001) documents efforts by an aboriginal community in New York to establish “two-way schooling” that preserves a core of aboriginal teachings and culture. Agbo is nonetheless concerned with some pitfalls of poorly implemented local initiatives in aboriginal communities and suggests that the solution is not to simply devolve educational programs to the local level but for representatives “to begin establishing dialogue and mechanisms for developing a holistic system of education for Aboriginal children” (Agbo, 2002: 296). For example, in July 2003 an agreement was signed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the Secretary of State for the federal Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This agreement fosters greater authority by the First Nations in on-reserve educational

programs, as well as greater influence in British Columbia public schools (Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2003). The province of Saskatchewan implemented a “School Plus” educational initiative in 2003 whereby the ethnocultural diversity of all students would be fostered along with new educational opportunities (Carr-Stewart, 2003: 227–228). Significantly, there are few historical examples of such partnerships and initiatives. One short-lived example was the day-schooling initiative offered by Methodist missionaries and Ojibwa people between 1824 and 1833. This initiative included bilingual instruction—such that the Ojibwa mother tongue was preserved verbally and in the forms of “texts and writings”—and the development of a cadre of Ojibwa leaders with some academic instruction (MacLean, 2002). These modern, ongoing trends towards aboriginal self-determination reflect a willingness to form partnerships with non-aboriginal stakeholders, as well as a strategy of reclaiming education altogether: as Grand Chief John Peter Kelly said, “Education is like love. We cannot delegate others to exercise it on our behalf” (cited in York, 1990: 26). Other measures of change for First Nations students involve approximately 30 aboriginal students currently registered at University of Toronto Law School, design of aboriginal-oriented programming, and the hiring of aboriginal activist and scholar Darlene Johnson as an Assistant Professor (Baillie, 2004: 20–21).

5. WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION: SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Issues in educational access in Canada fall into perspective through a UN report that estimated that one-sixth of people worldwide live in “squalid areas” or slums, and are denied adequate water supplies, sanitation, and legal and public services. Worldwide, Africa has the highest proportion of slum dwellers (at 20%), followed by Latin America at 14%. By contrast, the 30 most affluent countries have only 2% of their population in slums (Vidal, 2003). Thus those arguing for progressive change in law and higher education acknowledge ongoing barriers to such access. These include globalization, government cutbacks in support of education, and corresponding increases in tuition fees. For example, the University of Toronto Law School expects to increase tuition fees from US\$12,000 annually to US\$22,000 over a five-year period. Even with university-sponsored loans and the safeguard of possibly forgiving some debt, concerns remain over dramatic increases in tuition (Pickel, 2003: 67–69).

Another facet of a broader approach to education goes beyond notification and access to standard information to incorporate Traditional

Environmental Knowledge (TEK). Often scorned as primitive by more scientifically oriented figures, TEK is recognized by various bodies such as the UN and the World Congress on Economic Development, and recently the Canadian federal government accorded TEK “equal standing” alongside Western science in environmental impact studies (Tsuji and Ho, 2002). For some, education is approached as access to public interest information. Cass Sunstein discusses health risks faced by workers and consumers in the form of environmental pollution or toxins in food, and outlines several legal initiatives that require manufacturers to post warnings about products, whether these are cigarettes, pesticides, or pharmaceutical products. Sunstein emphasizes the necessity of system-wide change, including public education: “markets will not promote justice unless they are made part of a system that offers minimally decent opportunities to all” (Sunstein, 1997: 327–329, 385).

The naive view that legal and social measures act as a boon is offset by research findings that well-intentioned legislation—for example, rent control measures, affirmative action hiring policies—may generate new difficulties for disadvantaged groups (see Sunstein, 1997: 163). Unequal opportunities take many forms in Canada, including lack of “behavioral and linguistic skills,” inadequate clothing, and poor nutrition (Pike, 1988: 148). Often ignored or minimized in public school curricular offerings, some alternative school initiatives tackle issues of discrimination and exclusion. Other initiatives include the development of sourcebooks that help to promote literacy for visible-minority women and to address barriers facing this population (Green and Isserlis, 2001), and access initiatives such as England’s Schools Access Initiative (SAI), which integrates students with disabilities with other students, bringing the former into mainstream education (BBC News, 2003). Other associations also put education into action, lobbying for greater access to assistive technology (AT) for persons with disabilities (Arizona Teaching Access Program, 2002; National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons, 2002).

Researchers have noted the “extreme disadvantage” facing many second-generation immigrants of color, such as West Indian newcomers who endure deprivation and must confront structural obstacles to higher education (Waters, 1998). Indeed, “cultural racism,” as distinct from overt racism, is defined by Hansman (1999) as a form of racism where cultural works of “historically oppressed groups” are excluded through majority group power and “racial prejudice.” Women still face barriers to higher education in the developing world. These barriers include poverty, assumptions that such fields as science, business, and law are men’s work, discrimination in hiring and pay, and lack of educational infrastructure. Those seeking to ease these obstacles to basic and higher education must take account of child

care, flexible delivery of instruction (including distance-education opportunities), overcoming cultural stereotypes of girls and women, and ensuring that curricula is not gender-biased (Evans, 1995: 5). On an international scale, even with constitutional commitments to universal education and despite improvements in educational access and literacy levels, India had an appreciable gap between the literacy of men (64%) and women (39%) as of 1991 (Velkoff, 1998). Illiteracy among women has been associated with “higher levels of fertility and mortality, poor nutritional status, low earning potential, and little autonomy within the household” (p. 1). Multisector approaches have been taken under the auspices of Strategies for Advancing Girls’ Education (SAGE). SAGE determines “country-specific barriers” facing girls and women and works in conjunction with national ministries and other organizations to increase educational opportunities for females (SAGE, 2003).

There has been greater attention to generic barriers facing adults who seek higher education. Specifically, inflexible curricula, Monday–Friday course offerings, and uncertainties in registration for key courses discourage many mature adults, especially those with substantial work and family obligations. At Simon Fraser University, an integrated studies program encourages mature students with at least eight years of work experience in a leadership capacity and some postsecondary education to complete a Bachelor of General Studies. Strengths of this program include preparation for university entrance, selection of instructors, a cohort-based model, and courses that integrate liberal arts and humanities with career experience and challenges (Dunlop and Burtch, 2003). Other adult-oriented initiatives include the Weekend University at the University of Calgary, where mature students attend classes alongside younger students interested in weekend classes. Such innovations increase access to universities for mature applicants discouraged by standard course offerings, many of which are geared to younger graduates of high school or college certificate programs.

Dewar (1997) addresses gender barriers and solutions, making a strong case for the devaluation of women in adult education, including income differentials and overlooking women’s contributions to this field. She also draws on postmodernism in arguing for a more subtle assessment of women’s contributions and ongoing efforts to transform education, trace women’s historical experiences, and gain insight into their identities in contemporary society. Even so, there are grave concerns about some efforts to promote inclusive learning environments if these efforts violate standards of proof, whether methodological or legal. Patricia Marchak provides a detailed, critical examination of the McEwen Report of 1995, a response to allegations of racism and sexism in the Political Science Department at the

University of British Columbia. She demonstrates how contrary evidence and fundamental procedural fairness were set aside during the course of this report (Marchak, 1996).

Here legal changes can lay a bedrock foundation for social change. For example, Title IX, a law enacted by the United States Congress in 1972, helped to overturn prohibition of females from such courses as “auto mechanics and criminal justice.” Women students have also made dramatic gains in postsecondary attendance, with women comprising 55% of US undergraduates today as compared to 44% in 1972, and dramatic increases in women’s participation in college and university athletics, skyrocketing from 1% in 1972 to 40% nationwide today. Again, these tangible gains are lessened by underfunding of women’s postsecondary athletic programs, continuing barriers to participation in mathematics and the sciences, and surveys that highlight pervasive sexual harassment of females (NNCC Title IX, 2002). Some advocates argue for more progressive programming in law schools, modeled on UCLA’s School of Law, which established a “social justice stream” in 1997 designed to attract a wide range of students interested in Public Interest Law (Backhouse, 2003: 43). Similarly, the internationally oriented Center for Anti-Oppressive Education (2004) promotes “social justice in teacher education” and opposition to racism, sexism, and barriers of social class and disability. This collectively oriented focus meshes with ongoing work by advocacy groups, some within the labor movement, addressing housing, education, and race relations (Ontario Federation of Labour, 2004; Grass Roots Education and Empowerment Network, 2004).

6. CONCLUSION: WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Education is a major force in economic, intellectual, social, and cultural empowerment. Education of women, for example, is favored on a global scale (International Centre for Girls and Women Education in Africa, 2001; UN, 2004). Over 40 American law schools have adopted a “Street Law” initiative that gives high school teachers and students access to law students and legal information through lesson plans and classroom teaching (Legal Education and Empowerment Project, 2005). Attempts to increase social justice in schooling and higher education is evident: for instance, some protest the trend towards computer-based instruction with its expenditures on software and hardware, as well as the trend towards corporate influence in Canadian high schools (Robertson, 1998).

More broadly, our understanding of intersections of education and law must go beyond state-supported structures and policies to include efforts in civil society,² especially organizations whose business is to promote access to education in all its dimensions. Understanding the range of accredited educational programs and other initiatives that promote knowledge takes us well into—and then well beyond—the focus on widening access to university many share. This process, which involves new possibilities for pluralistic curricula, staffing, and programming, is based on an understanding of traditional barriers to postsecondary education in Canada, new threats to access, and recognition of initiatives that transform the rhetoric of inclusion into educational practice both within institutions and in public-interest education.

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²Jamie Swift (1999: 4–5) defines civil society as the “activity of citizens in free association who lack the authority of the state, although the groupings may have gained access to state resources (and thereby bargained away some of their autonomy). Such activities are motivated by objectives other than profit-making, although citizens may undertake income-generating activities as a means of furthering their objectives.”

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Chapter 6

GLOBALIZATION AND STATE SOCIALISM: END OF ILLUSIONS OR NEW EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES?

W. John Morgan

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has been a much-debated concept during the past decade. Some believe that the impulse towards economic interdependence and monoculture is both beneficial and irresistible. Curiously, what is often forgotten is that much of the world has also experimented with the ideology of state socialism. That experiment has now effectively come to an end. This chapter considers that historic process and its implications for educational opportunities, focusing on the experience of the Russian Federation, a part of the former Soviet Union, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and of the People's Republic of China. Two of these countries still claim formally to be state socialist systems. The period of state socialism was also a period of ideological conflict, with the world uncertain of the eventual political outcome. That was decided with the end of the so-called Cold War in the late 1980s. Subsequently, capitalist globalization has become, like paradigm and postmodernism, a buzz phrase used regularly in political and economic discourse and in the everyday language of newspapers and other media. It is also asserted that it is a phenomenon new to the world, with trade and culture carried along by the technological leaps of recent decades. But, as the American social historian Charles Tilly has claimed, from the Eurasian perspective the world has "globalized" politically and economically at least three times between the tenth and the twentieth centuries (Tilly, 1995: 1).

During the same millennium, the world globalized culturally twice before the twentieth century, with the introduction of mass printing in the fifteenth century and the telegraph and telephone four centuries later. Other scientific and technological developments acted as part of a rising tide of global awareness and connection, often with devastating social and political consequences. During the twentieth century this was manifested in two World Wars, followed by an equally bitter ideological Cold War that was

often fought literally but by proxy. The end of this epoch saw capitalist globalization, as a concept and a phenomenon, quickly become the defining feature of the final decade of the old millennium and the first decade of the new one. As a concept, globalization refers both to the compression of the time and space of social relations and to the intensification of consciousness of the world existing as a whole. Many commentators now claim that recent developments far surpass any previous global links. The problem is whether such changes can be defined and measured. One simple definition is that globalization increases the range of economic, political, and social powers and influence beyond national and even continental boundaries and identities. In its most extreme form, the concept of globalization predicts the end of the national economy and the end of the nation-state as the primary unit of political organization and loyalty.

Globalization's characteristics are spatial reorganization of production systems and labor markets, the spread of industrial organization and manufacture across borders, technological revolutions in computers, telecommunications, and transport, the spread and dominance of market forces, the reemergence of *laissez-faire* as an economic orthodoxy, and the substantial migration of peoples. It also claims the emergence of a borderless world in which global communications and a relentless trend towards a monoculture absorbs or even erases national cultures. One of the chief advocates of globalization and its assumed benefits is Kenichi Ohmae, from the international consulting firm McKinsey & Co. He argues that (Ohmae, 1991: 269):

Inevitably, the emergence of the interlinked economy brings with it an erosion of national sovereignty as the power of information directly touches local communities, academic, professional, and social institutions, corporations and individuals. It is this borderless world that will give participating economies the capacity for boundless prosperity.

It is a phenomenon that demands sophisticated analysis, using history, economics, political science, anthropology, and sociology. Hitherto, such analysis has focused on defining and explaining causes, mechanisms, strategies, key players, and social and political consequences. The implications are enormous, particularly for those who still hold to the ideology of socialism or even to social democratic practice. The weakness of the nation-state in the face of global flows of money, goods, and services is seen as the final nail in the coffin of effective state intervention in political economy. Was Francis Fukuyama correct in proclaiming the end of history, accompanied by the global triumph of the free market led by the transnational corporations (Fukuyama, 1992)? As Tilly has pointed out, rights (or publicly enforceable claims) would certainly be at risk in such a world. Rights come into being as a result of negotiations that produce contracts to which authorities (historically governments) are always parties. Without authorities, no

rights exist. The relevant authorities may, in the future, not be states. Through intense struggles, incremental changes, and democratic reforms, workers in capitalist countries acquired substantial rights after 1850. These rights, including that to education, expanded up to and beyond World War II (Tilly, 1995). Such rights, however, were not established universally, “globally,” or at the same pace. The primacy of workers’ rights, indeed a “dictatorship of the proletariat” was, of course, the ideological justification for state socialism on the road to communism.

Citizenship and democracy depend on the maintenance of such rights. In general, a state’s capacity to pursue social policies, including workers’ rights, has depended on the power of enforcement. The globalization of economic activities and the creation of powerful transnational corporations are now undermining the capacity of states to pursue effective social policies. Tilly also argues that the world is becoming ever more unequal and proletarian. More and more people rely for their survival on wages they receive for work provided by other people’s capital. They cannot rely on the state to provide them with a social safety net, and they may be forced to move in order to find employment (Tilly, 1995: 23). This is a matter of some social urgency given the collapse of the coherent ideological alternative of state socialism. Are we moving from one form of capitalist organization to another, and, if so, what are the implications for educational policy in the states in transition from state socialism?

2. THE STATE SOCIALIST EXPERIMENT: THE END OF A RIVAL CIVILIZATION?

A key yet neglected feature of the impact of globalization is the end of state socialism as a rival globalization. This began historically with the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 and ended effectively with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. The relationship of state socialism, Marxism, education, and culture are now a matter of historical dispute (Morgan, 2003). Nevertheless, some polities still cling, at least in name, to the ideology. These are the People’s Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, North Korea, and the lonely Western hemisphere outpost of Cuba (Kapcia, 2001). Contemporary Marxists now reject these survivals, whether of the Leninist, Stalinist, or Maoist types, as deformations of socialism. More interestingly, Mikhail Bakunin, Marx’s ideological rival at the decisive meeting of the First International in 1872, had argued that the trajectory of state socialism was all too predictable (Bakunin, 1953). State socialist systems, whatever the variant, meant political rule by a single, hierarchically organized political party. Although motivated by the universal of Marxism–Leninism, its ideology was usually colored by

indigenous socialist and national struggles. This led to tensions when it came to power, as it constructed a society with all areas of life, economic, social, legal, religious, cultural, and certainly educational “subordinated to political criteria, regardless of appropriateness, in the name of an ideologically derived goal” (Schöpflin, 1990: 4; Morgan, 2001: viii).

Whatever the defects of the state socialist systems in practice, for much of the twentieth century they were an alternative to the capitalist system and a form of globalization (Claudin, 1975). “Communist education and culture” (Morgan, 2003) was the path to “enlightenment” (Fitzpatrick, 1971). This would lead to the “the education of the future” (Castles and Wüstenberg, 1979), built on the site of “proletarian cultural revolution” (Fitzpatrick, 1978; Morgan, 2000; Seeberg, 2000), as the pragmatic means to “socialist modernization” (Fitzpatrick, 1979) and as an “alternative development model” (Pepper, 1996). Between 1917 and 1945, the state socialist experiment was confined to the Soviet Union—from the late 1920s to Stalin’s attempt to build “socialism in one country” (Carr, 1958, 1959, 1964). This resulted in an educational system designed to provide the human resources capable of carrying out grand development strategies. This, in turn, led to both managerialism and elitism, with schools and higher education structured to meet the requirements of state socialist planners (Morgan, 2003: 193–198).

The state socialist systems were extended as a consequence of World War II, yet as their global influence increased paradoxically their ideological influence declined. “The trajectory of the state socialist systems in Asia has followed a similar, though not identical path” (Morgan, 2001: xviii). The collapse of the Soviet Union and of communist Eastern Europe in 1989 left the People’s Republic of China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba as the remaining state socialist power structures. China and Vietnam are both engaged in moves towards the creation of a market economy and seek to enter the world trading system through membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), which China has now achieved. Nevertheless, the political elite seeks to retain power, though without ideological justification. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* in the Soviet Union, *doi moi* in Vietnam, and the post-Mao reforms in China, should be seen in this context—as attempts to keep political ideology in line with a rapidly changing economic and social reality (Morgan, 2001: xix). This process of transition from state socialism has understandably stimulated great political and intellectual interest and generated a considerable literature. However, until recently there has been relatively little examination of the consequences for educational systems designed to meet the needs of collapsed or discredited ideological systems (Webber, 1999; Morgan and Kjlucharev, 2001; Webber and Liikanen, 2001). For educational policy and practice, the further consequences of the absorption of the state socialist countries in a globalized

capitalist system are considered even less, other than in terms of the need to develop their human resources in a different way. In what follows we shall consider three examples—the post-Soviet Russian Federation, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and the People’s Republic of China—with a specific focus on higher education.

3. THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Russia is the largest of the states that succeeded the Soviet Union. It covers a vast land area from European Russia to the eastern coast of Siberia in Asia. Its population is over 140 million, predominantly Russians, but with many ethnic minorities, and is organized constitutionally as a federation. This organization has not been without problems, as the separatist war in Muslim Chechnya has demonstrated. However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, some progress has been made in establishing a democratic system of governance and key political freedoms within a rule of law, although the latter are sometimes still tenuous. The transition from state socialism has been fraught with difficulties; widespread corruption is a serious problem, undermining the legitimacy and accountability of public institutions. For many, if not most, ordinary citizens of the Russian Federation, the process has been a painful one. Confidence in the future is not high: the national income has fallen by one-third in the last 15 years; the economic and social gap has grown accordingly, with over 50 million people living below the official poverty line, many far below it. Yet Russia is not a poor country, with a per capita Gross National Product (GNP) of US\$2,270 according to World Bank estimates. It also has huge natural and human resources, with a generally well-educated population, if one not yet adapted to the new economic and labor market conditions. A sustained solution requires fundamental state reforms, with a strategy for education and training being potentially a key factor.

In June 2000 the Russian government adopted a social and economic modernization program designed to stop the country’s decline and place it on the path to economic and social growth. A central aim is to integrate Russia more closely into the global system of politics and trading. In the present world political and economic climate, Russia, with its former colonial relationship with Central Asia, is feeling uneasy and perhaps isolated. As a consequence, it sees political and economic participation in European and global organizations as essential to its security and development. Recognizing the challenge of globalization, the Russian government is committed, even anxious, to play a full role in the G8 and the Council of Europe and, through a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), to link up with the European Union (EU). Full membership in the WTO is also

a major priority. The Russian government has recognized the need to enhance the capacity of its state institutions within a market economy. The problem is how to sustain a social policy that will benefit all the people of Russia, to improve their access to the labor market and self-employment, and to increase their understanding of and capacity to realize their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The necessary reforms encompass all aspects of economic, social, and political life, with the success of any one depending on progress with the others.

The review and reform of the educational system at all levels is a crucial part of this process. For instance, even the human development indicators by which Russia has traditionally scored well, such as rates of primary school enrollment and infant and maternal mortality, have declined. What should be done if the Russian system of education is to meet the country's needs and aspirations? As Muckle has pointed out, education in post-Soviet Russia is in a state of tension and crisis, with a number of opposing tendencies at work. These include centralism versus regional devolution, state provision versus private education, equality versus elitism, tradition versus innovation, education versus training, and direction versus freedom. No one knows what shape the new system should take or how it is to be financed, while the morale, organization, and public esteem of educators, especially teachers, is low. None of these tensions are exclusive to Russia, but after the complacency of the Soviet days, they are particularly acute. "The resolution of these conflicts and the solution to these problems are a vital task for Russian educators today" (Muckle, 2001: 20). The specific problems facing Russian higher education and research have been highlighted in a report published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It spoke ominously of the "deterioration, fragmentation and exclusion" that threatened the Russian system (OECD, 1998: 17–18; Chapman, 2001: 51). The report emphasized that "one of the great challenges facing Russian society is to manage the transition and re-structuring of its higher education system to match the changed academic, economic, and cultural circumstances of the new era" (OECD, 1998: 7–15; Chapman, 2001: 40).

These problems were considered again in a speech given by the Minister of Education, V.M. Fillipov, to the All-Russian Conference of Educators in the Moscow Kremlin on January 14, 2000, reported by Chapman (Filipov, 2000; Chapman, 2001: 38–40). This speech was a mixture of somber analysis and optimism. The chief problem was the serious shortage of public funds for educational maintenance and development. This was leading to real decline, aggravated by the specific economic crisis of August 1998. There was a marked fall in standards achieved at secondary school level, especially in the sciences, and a perceived gap among formal curriculum, the practical expectations of employers, and the requirements of higher education in the new situation. There was also a looming demographic

problem, since by 2009 a substantial reduction in the numbers of secondary school leavers would lead to an expected “three hundred thousand unfilled state-funded student places at vocational and higher education institutions across the Russian Federation” (Chapman, 2001: 39).

More positively, the Minister pointed to the growth, since Soviet times, of student enrollments in higher education, from 219 to 260 per 10,000 of the population. Such students were enrolling in degree programs that were much more responsive to the wishes of students and the requirements of potential employers, a response to the pressures of the market economy. Universities were also expected to find a substantial proportion of their funding through income generated by providing paid services to fee-paying students, including adults, to business and industry, and to other customers for educational and training services or “multichannel financing.” This trend is likely to grow significantly as Russia becomes more integrated with the global system; foreign suppliers of education and training are already active in Russia, while those Russian students who can afford it look for educational opportunities abroad. This shows a growing trend to social elitism and inequality in education, as Minister Fillipov recognized. He said: “None of us, whether as educators or parents, can feel at ease with a situation in which university admission is granted to school leavers on the basis of either paid tutorial sessions or fee paying university preparatory courses or, at best, by means of specialized preparation in selective school classes for which parents generally have to pay” (Filipov, 2000: 13; Chapman, 2001: 39).

As the OECD report concluded, Russia’s transition “requires a balance between change and respect for aspects of the legacy of the past” (OECD, 1998: 9; Chapman, 2001: 40). As the impact of globalization increases on Russia’s already vulnerable post-Soviet society, it will become increasingly difficult to maintain that balance.

4. THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Vietnam is a country potentially of great importance in Southeast Asia. Recovering from a long legacy of war and conflict, it has a population of over 80 million, with over 50% under the age of 21. It is governed by a single party, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), which retains a firm control over the state. This is legitimized by the Party’s successful record of national liberation against French colonialism, Japanese occupation, and American intervention, and by its policy of economic reform and market liberalization, or *doi moi*. However, the Communist Party is acutely aware of the threat posed by the economic and social forces released by the reform process. It is the only formal forum for the expression of political ideas.

It wishes to protect key state institutions and instruments of social policy from the effective collapse that too rapid a process of transition brought about elsewhere. Certainly, the Communist Party remains capable of mobilizing the mass of the population in support of common political and developmental aims, such as reducing rural poverty and regional inequality; it maintains power and influence through party, state, and mass organizations, which operate at national, provincial, district, commune, and village levels. However, alongside this is the emergence of a nascent civil society that generates new ideas in response to fresh needs and aspirations and reflects new interests.

Vietnam is a country poor in terms of national income, with per capita GNP estimated at US\$320, where about half the population lives on less than US\$100 annually. Nevertheless, it scores well on many socioeconomic indicators, such as school attendance and attainments in literacy and numeracy, as the United Nations index of human development recognizes (DFID, 1998: 2). In addition, Vietnam is now committed to transition from a centrally planned command economy to a market economy. It looks to strengthen its political and economic relations with partners in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world; in 1998 it applied to join the WTO. Again it is a question of balance; Vietnam needs to develop a policy framework that can sustain growth in a global economic environment and, at the same time, develop effective and responsive public services that provide both opportunities and a safety net. This includes reform of and expenditure on the education system. The latter stood at 11% of the national budget in 1994, rose to 15% in 1999, and is planned to rise to 20% by 2010; primary education doubled its share of expenditure during the 1990s, but public expenditure still favors higher education (DFID, 1998; Dung, Nguyen, and Morgan, 2006, forthcoming).

That said, higher education reform is seen as crucial to the economic and social development of Vietnam in a globalized economic environment, as a World Bank loan to the Vietnamese government of US\$80 million for this purpose underlines (Do and Morgan, 1999; Do, 2001). Between the 1950s and the 1980s, Vietnam relied on educational aid and assistance from the Soviet Union and other members of the eastern European Soviet bloc to educate an elite and to train skilled manpower. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of state socialism as an alternative global political system was a heavy blow to the Vietnamese Communist Party and state, and specifically to the system of higher education (Dung, 2001). Vietnamese higher education now finds itself at a crossroads, inasmuch as the prevailing soviet educational model is recognized as inappropriate for a market economy; yet there is no clear alternative that would leave the dominant political system and ideology intact. This was the dilemma considered at a national workshop on university autonomy and accountability held in Hanoi

in 1999 (Do and Morgan, 1999). Historically, the Vietnamese state has set priorities and quotas for all higher education activities centrally, yet the workshop reached consensus that a policy of university autonomy and accountability was urgently needed. The role of private universities also needs to be clarified and their activities encouraged, especially those of people-founded or nonprofit universities. Finally, the development of post-graduate education needed to be undertaken seriously, together with the question of Vietnamese participation in education overseas (Dung, 2001). The situation is developing rapidly, with foreign universities and other providers of education and training, especially from Australia, already active in Vietnam on a commercial basis—a trend that is likely to increase dramatically over the next decade, as the impact of globalization increases on the Vietnamese state and society.

5. THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Because of the sheer size of its population, China is an altogether exceptional case. It is now a member of the WTO, an announcement greeted with great interest and enthusiasm since membership is key to its continued development and prosperity. Yet China is in the midst of two transitions: from a command to a market economy and from a predominantly rural to an urban and industrial society. It is driven economically by the external demands of the global market and by the domestic need to bring about economic and social changes in an orderly fashion, retaining the political authority of the Chinese Communist Party. This includes resolving the problems of regional poverty and inequality and the move from employment in large state-owned enterprises, which has placed a strain on the transition to a labor market system. As so often happens in analyzing the impact of globalization, one sees a profound tension between the global and the local, which is particularly severe in those states and societies attempting to make the transition from state socialism. This was dramatically evident in the reaction of the Chinese authorities to the student demonstrations centered in Tiananmen Square in 1989. The reaction demonstrated brutally that the Chinese Communist Party retained strict political control over state and society; this has not changed since.

China is nevertheless on a path leading towards a modernization that requires the rapid building of an infrastructure capable of servicing a market economy. It is also true that if China achieves only some of its growth targets, the volume of demand will put enormous pressures on international markets, to say nothing of the environmental impact; absorbing China into a global economy and polity is an enormous challenge. However, China, economically poor, with a desperate population and internal unrest, could

become dangerously volatile and no less of a challenge. It is essential that China be supported in efforts to develop, and relations with her “depend on whether the challenge represented is seen as a threat or as an opportunity” (Morgan, 2000: 158). Until recently, education was chronically underfunded, a legacy of the Cultural Revolution; until 1988 it was allocated only 1% of the GNP, although the ratio of spending among primary, secondary, and tertiary education favored the last. Over the last decade, China has focused its energies on Project 211, or the development of 100 select universities and certain key disciplines in a strategic attempt to make them competitive globally during the twenty-first century. This reflects the policy of enlarging the pool of highly qualified and technically competent persons (*China Handbook*, 1993: 155; Chakrabarti, 1998).

A further strategy has been to increase dramatically the numbers of Chinese students studying abroad. In 1972 the Chinese government sent 36 language students to the United Kingdom and France; by 1978 the number of students overseas numbered only 860. However, by 2001 it is estimated that some 400,000 Chinese students had studied abroad, with between 40,000 and 50,000 expected to leave China for study purposes in 2001. The chief destination is the United States, with 53% of the total, while Japan accounts for 17%. Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia account for a further 26%, with the remaining 4% going to other countries. This policy is double-edged in that China is concerned about the possible effects of “brain drain.” It is estimated that, between 1978 and 2001, some 140,000 students returned to China upon completion of their studies, with around 260,000 remaining overseas. Nevertheless, it has continued to encourage studying abroad, together with supporting schemes for eventual return to China. It has recognized that the benefits to the overall development of China far outweigh the disadvantages. The returned scholars have proved to be of great influence, occupying key positions both in Chinese higher education and in business and industry. It is also recognized that such a free flow of students is an inevitable consequence of participating in a global market, as is the sale of educational services (Jiang and Morgan, 1993; Wang and Morgan, 2002).

Foreign universities, keen to recruit fee-paying foreign students, are now very active in China; the next stage is likely to see a serious attempt to provide educational services directly in China or through e-learning, perhaps in partnership with Chinese institutions. Some Chinese commentators recognize the need for political adaptation to the emerging market in educational services. The benefits are improvement in the quality of all sectors of Chinese education, promotion of lifelong learning, and the international mobility of personnel. These provide the opportunity for China to boost its economy and international influence by developing its own educational market, accepting many more foreign students for language and cultural studies

and for general academic study and research. Many contend that China has no other option than to embrace the opportunities of WTO membership (Lao, 2001; NCEDR, 2001; Xiao, 2001a,b). Not surprisingly, the World Bank Institute emphasizes this: “Entry to the WTO will also provide a conduit for the import of foreign technical expertise, implementation experience and management. . . . The Chinese government should take this opportunity to promote competition, invest in IT development, foster talent, and encourage state-of-the-art core technologies” (Dahlman and Aubert, 2001: 95).

Yet on August 24, 1989, only 16 years ago, an editorial in the *People's Daily* blamed the events at Tiananmen Square in May and June of that year “on bourgeois liberal ideas that had flooded in to fill an ideological vacuum” (*People's Daily*, 1989; Morgan, 2000: 167). But the conditions for opening Chinese education to marketization and privatization have since been firmly established by the drive “to produce quickly the scientists, engineers, managers and, for that matter, entrepreneurs, who would lead economic development” (Morgan, 2000: 167; Chan, 2001). This is fraught with ideological difficulty for the Chinese Communist Party, as it grapples with tensions between the global and the local, which are now increasingly evident. These include the growing rural–urban disparities, the question of ethnic minorities, elite-mass distinctions, and the return of class and inequality to Chinese society and education, with the “increasing need to resort to foreign models and guidance” (Epstein, 1993; Morgan, 2000: 170).

6. CONCLUSION

There are unanswered questions about the extent of globalization and what it means in specific terms. First, the internationalization of the world economy is not an unprecedented phenomenon. Capital accumulation has always been international. Yet, contrary to what Kenichi Ohmae believes, most transnational corporations remain nationally based, though trading multinationally. They are therefore better described as multinational rather than transnational corporations. There is a paradox here. The fundamental idea of globalization is that wealth is created in an open marketplace. It aims at an interlinked economy that depends for its success on the free flow of information, capital, goods, and services, as well as the free (rather than compelled) migration of corporations and people, and the knowledge and ideas they represent. Collectively, these factors have altered the social and economic policy terrain of nation-states and placed a new premium on the value of human and social capital. This is because neither national nor provincial governments can rely on the same range of instruments they traditionally used to regulate the economy and to cushion any adverse effects

of capital flows on the industrial welfare state. A global economy requires governments to formulate a new approach not only to trade, monetary, and fiscal policies, but also to structural policies. This presents a particularly severe dilemma for countries attempting also to make the transition from a command economy and a single party political structure.

As the scope for intervention in the macroeconomic sphere becomes more limited, policy-makers attempt to secure comparative national advantage by focusing on residual factors, such as productivity, technological innovation, human capital, and civil society. Hence, the link may be found between educational policy and performance. Ohmae has argued the need for a global framework of governance. Such a framework would ensure the end of protectionism necessary for the interlinked economy (i.e., globalization) to succeed. This would include the protectionism of regional trade clubs such as the EU and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). He suggests that the interlinked economy is not yet a reality, but believes that the paradigm for economic behavior is shifting in the direction of the “weave of economic and intellectual interdependence of nations” (Ohmae, 1991: 269). At the same time, educational policy and provision have also become areas for international trade. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) under the multilateral framework of the WTO provide the opportunity—perhaps even with the aspiration to provide the new single framework for global governance that Ohmae would welcome. The transfer of educational services as aid also remains important. Both states and international aid organizations remain active in the encouragement and provision of education in the developing world. The creation of a knowledge base in the developing countries is essential if they are to establish national education systems that respond to local needs and respect local cultures. While international cooperation is very important, given the principle of comparative advantage governments in developing countries should focus on the development of a strong knowledge base, while aid organizations may help in knowledge management (Gardner and Lewis, 1996; Dahlman and Aubert, 2001).

The principal educational mechanism for developing human skills and knowledge remains the formal system of education. Though it is difficult to demonstrate statistically, there is a general consensus that an educated and skilled labor force is a necessary condition for economic growth. However, any evaluation of the role of education in the process of economic development should go beyond the analysis of a single statistic of aggregate economic growth. It is also necessary to consider the structure and patterns of that economic growth and its distribution. Furthermore, education is not limited to imparting the knowledge and skills that enable individuals to function within labor markets. Formal education also imparts values, ideas, attitudes, and aspirations that may or may not be in a particular nation’s so-

called rational developmental interest. The pressures of globalization will increase the tensions between the two. The resolution of such tension must be seen from a public policy perspective and should be mediated according to local priorities and cultural preferences. In practice, despite the superficial convergence of policy rhetoric and objectives, the actual process remains dynamic, a complicated process of interaction among local, regional, and global forces.

As education is expected to be an engine for economic productivity and competitiveness, so it becomes an integral part of this process. It is true that educational systems do not set their own agendas, despite the arguments for academic freedom and institutional autonomy. These are set by national governments and are guided by a range of interpretations of the system's mandate, including response to globalization, its capacity, and the culture and systems of governance of individual states and societies. Even within states there are local variations, as federal systems demonstrate. Again, as education has become increasingly market-oriented, so government's role has changed from that of sole or main provider of educational services to that of regulator or service purchaser. It amounts to a "hollowing out" of the state, with the loss of some functions upward to supranational bodies and the loss of others downward to the local state or to nonstate bodies, commercial or voluntary. Privatization of services, including education, is central to this new approach in practically all states, even those that remain state socialist, such as Vietnam and China.

In such states, international investment is encouraged, the state sector is reduced, sometimes drastically, and the private sector is encouraged to increase in size and influence (Mok and Chan, 2002; Mok and Welch, 2002: 35). This provides a real opportunity to strike a balance between the state and the market by identifying and empowering the sometimes-neglected sphere of civil society. If this is achieved, there is no need to fear any loss of diversity—rather, the opposite is to be expected (Martinussen, 1997). Despite the fact that controversy remains about the causes and characteristics of globalization, there is general recognition of its wide-ranging impact. This is evidenced in the networking of individuals, institutions, and corporations across the globe, a direct consequence of the revolution in information and communication technology, and the internationalization of economies. The danger is that, as electronic networks encompass the world, business and intellectual elites in the new corporations will establish a global identity that will enable them to favor their own interests. The mass of the people could remain effectively excluded from or stratified in the new knowledge economy and society. Many will remain surplus in the global labor market unless they are willing to migrate, and if they are without skills, they will find that process a harsh experience. The specific problems experienced by countries such as Russia, Vietnam, and China must

therefore be seen both from a historical perspective and in the present global context. The tensions between the global and the local, which occur everywhere (Morgan 2002), are particularly severe in circumstances of failed ideology, which the educational system had hitherto been used to support. They are between the global and the local, the “great” and the “little” traditions, tradition and modernity (and now postmodernity), the universal and the individual, the long-term and the short-term, and, crucially, between economic competition and a genuine equality of opportunity necessary to the maintenance of social justice and cohesion.

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PART II

OVERVIEWS

Chapter 7

WIDENING PARTICIPATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: POVERTY AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Julia Preece

1. INTRODUCTION

One in five of the world's population—two-thirds of them women—live in abject poverty; on the margins of existence, without adequate food, clean water, sanitation or healthcare, and without education. That is 1.2 billion people whose lives are blighted by poverty, robbed of their dignity in a world of growing wealth and material plenty An estimated 113 million children of primary-school age have never gone to school And one in four adults in the developing world—that is 870 million people—are unable to read or write. (HMSO, 2000: 12, 36)

The concept of widening participation in education has different meanings for different countries, depending on the particular country's overall political and socioeconomic status. As the above quotation indicates, for many of the poorer countries widening participation is a matter of accessing education at all, even at the most basic level. Table 7-1 below highlights the extent of disparities in participation even at primary school level across the world.

While the global figure for enrollment in primary school education stands at 90%, in sub-Saharan Africa it is only 56% (DFID, 2000a: 37). However, in some countries, such as Ethiopia, participation rates are as low as 34% (Alemu et al., 2003). By contrast, in the North widening participation and issues of poverty are usually linked to opportunities that marginalized social groups, with relatively poor socioeconomic status, have to enter higher education (see Osborne, 2003). Other chapters in this book specifically addresses widening participation and higher education. Nevertheless, it is important to note here some key distinctions that serve to perpetuate the North–South divide on this issue, the most important coming from international donor agencies and their policy-makers. There

Table 7-1. Participation rates in universal primary education (% of all school-age children).

World total	Developing country total	East Asia and Pacific	Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Latin America and Caribbean	Middle East and North Africa	South Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa	
1997	90	88	99	100	94	87	77	56

has been a tendency (manifested in the Millennium Development Goals) to encourage emerging industrialized nations to pursue only basic education goals, while the broader goal of “lifelong learning” is confined to advanced industrialized nations. So while Scandinavia focuses on making higher education available for all (Tarrou and Holmesland, 2002), donor agencies only support basic education for all in low and middle income countries (UNESCO, 2002). This helps to perpetuate the gap between rich and poor countries, with consequent effects on their ability to contribute equally to global policies. To achieve real social justice, education should be seen throughout the world as a lifelong process, catering to regional differences but with the same range of opportunities. It is necessary to challenge the assumption that education has different purposes for different sectors of society and different parts of the world. Education also has to be seen in its broadest sense to encompass formal, nonformal, and informal systems.

In this chapter we shall explore the role of education in reducing poverty. Here the guiding questions are: How does poverty restrict access to education? And what is being done to widen access to education for the poor? We shall look at current responses to poverty, particularly in relation to international development targets, and argue that poverty is often a consequence of the social exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized social groups. While education alone cannot eradicate poverty, it can contribute to its eradication by creating holistic and relevant participation opportunities for the most vulnerable sectors of society.

2. THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN REDUCING POVERTY

Education is a proven contributory to reducing poverty. As the UNESCO IIEP (2002: 25) document states:

Education has been shown to have an impact on individual workforce outcomes such as a higher income, but the impact is greater than that.

Literacy and formal schooling are linked with reduced fertility rates, improved health and sanitation practices and an increased ability to access information and participate in various social and economic processes. Educated parents also tend to invest more in children's schooling, health/nutrition, and human capital measures important for future well-being. *Ensuring women's access to education plays a key role in the transition from an investment in child quantity to an investment in child quality.*

The evidence also indicates that basic education affects not only wages but also broader workforce outcomes, such as participation in the formal labor market, work in more modern sectors, and (particularly for women) the ability to earn regular income from work (Spohr, 2002).

Education alone, however, cannot reduce poverty. Countries need a stable political economy in addition to other factors, with laws that support equitable access to goods, lands, and services. Furthermore, the overriding argument for widening participation for social justice is that education has to be linked to both a moral and a functional purpose.

In pursuit of a more holistic agenda that stresses social justice, Harber (2002: 267–269) asks for education that is designed to foster democratic values and behaviors. He claims that authoritarian rule has exacerbated levels of poverty and that education needs to instill knowledge, skills, and values for democracy. In this he concurs with a UNESCO approach that emphasizes the need to educate people with political knowledge, such as values and skills for democracy (UNESCO IIEP, 2002: 274).

There are generally two models for education that claim to address social exclusion, social justice, and widening participation. Broadly speaking, they fall under the notions of human or social capital and represent monetarist or socialist perspectives. I shall describe these terms briefly in the following sections.

2.1 Human capital model

Capital is interpreted as an asset that can be exchanged. Human capital represents the marketable worth of an individual in exchange for employment. The assets are skills, knowledge, and work attitudes that are competitive in a given model and therefore serve a very functional purpose. Despite the arguments by UNESCO and Harber touched on above, the human capital approach has dominated the lifelong learning agenda. Education is seen as a skills development resource for the workforce. In poor countries it is the primary model for poverty reduction by the donor community. Education as human capital can play a direct role in poverty reduction by enhancing marketable skills. Thus we see the earning potential of skills-based education

(Lee, 2002). But the human capital model of education is also premised on individualism, competitiveness in the labor market, and personal gain. This model creates a society that encourages survival of the fittest in a market economy. As a universalist approach, it does not challenge the societal and political structures that have created inequalities in the first place. Yet education can do more than this. It can also empower and create momentum for change (Bacchus, 1997).

2.2 Social capital model

Social capital is a collective asset. In recent years social capital has been promoted for its potential to nurture active citizenship and democracy within communities. It is argued that without social capital societies become dysfunctional. Since poverty is often closely associated with weak democracies (Øyen, 2002), adult education has an important role in nurturing social capital. Social capital is a complex and contested concept in relation to education (see Boström, 2002; Preston, 2003). Its core features, however, are commonly understood to include networks of relationships involving trust, communication, and collective identities. Baron et al. (2000) define it as the social networks, and the reciprocities that arise from them, within societal groups. Social capital is linked to economic development and social renewal and embodies values, such as trust, in shaping broader attitudes and behaviors.

Communities with strong social capital are seen as able to respond to participatory learning opportunities that increase their collective empowerment (Alladin, 1997: 80):

Participatory, liberating education seeks to increase equality in the access to knowledge and to continue to transform society. Minorities can liberate themselves through this process. Once they are emancipated, they can play a more active role in the development of the society as a whole.

Social capital has its critics insofar as the model can also have negative effects—for instance, by nurturing cohesive criminal gangs (Preston, 2003). It can also exclude certain social groups and resist change (Baron et al., 2000). Nevertheless, it is often presented as the missing link for bottom-up models of self-help and development, which are now regarded as the way forward for communities to move out of poverty (Hamilton, 1992). Education for social capital encourages critical, reflexive thinking and participation in social life (Johnston, 2003: 60). But poverty restricts such participation and the opportunity to access learning opportunities that would facilitate the positive growth of social capital.

2.3 How does poverty restrict access to and participation in education?

The right to education is recognized by international declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. So wherever the right to education is denied, this becomes a social justice issue, which affects people's life chances in a multidimensional way. Education is associated, for instance, with smaller families and improved family health, both of which contribute to a decrease in the likelihood of poverty (Adams, 2002: 24). By contrast, poverty reduces the opportunity for educational attainment in a number of ways.

Children from poor families are frequently taken out of school in order to earn a wage on farms or in family enterprises (Ramachandran, 2003). Families that are poor cannot afford textbooks and clothes or school uniforms. Poor rural communities may not even have access to secondary schooling. The UNDP (1997, cited in Lee, 2002) states that only one-fifth of the poor have access to secondary school as compared to 50% of the non-poor. People who are poor cannot afford either to pay for or to take time out to update their education. This makes them uncompetitive in the labor market, and thus creates a vicious cycle of low wages due to poor qualifications. Less educated households are less productive, get lower paying jobs, and therefore remain below the poverty line. Even when poor children do attend school they are often hungry, resulting in impeded concentration and learning (Haller, 2002). In poor families, girls are usually pulled out of school to look after siblings; girls and boys are also used for child labor to contribute to the family income. If schooling is not provided free of charge, the poor are unable to pay. Even in industrialized countries it is the rich who move into locations where they can send their children to the most expensive or best-equipped schools, creating by default poor areas and poor schools for the least well off (Jordan, 1996). Large families and poor health are often a result of poverty and lack of education, which in turn breeds further poverty-related inequalities.

Further exacerbating the situation, it is often highlighted that the education system itself impedes advancement for some poor families. Figueredo and Anzalone (2003) and Ramachandran (2003) point out that the formal knowledge taught in school is often irrelevant to people's daily lives; resources, including teachers and facilities, are insufficient in number and quality, and even the school year calendar precludes participation when it clashes with rural workloads. The World Bank (2003: 3) highlights the global tensions for poor people between choosing an education for the future and reducing poverty in the here and now:

In most countries, the poor value education as a potential route out of poverty. But sending a child to school can imply serious costs, both in terms of school fees, clothes, supplies and in the form of income loss. In several countries of the former Soviet Union the phenomenon of paying for education is new and, when combined with economic hardship, is having bad effects on children's school attendance. Despite their belief in the potential value of education, the poor sometimes question its quality, language of instruction, and relevance to employment.

3. INTERRELATED CAUSES OF POVERTY

Poverty is defined in many ways and has many faces (World Bank, 2003: 1):

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing inability to satisfy basic needs, lack of control over resources, lack of education and skills, poor health, malnutrition, lack of shelter, poor access to water and sanitation, vulnerability to shocks, violence and crime, lack of political freedom and voice.

The identification of causes of these various dimensions of poverty provides some insight into the role that education can play in widening participation and thereby in reducing at least some of the injustices that exist in society.

The most common structures and systems that create poverty are identified, to different degrees by most members of the international donor community, as: capitalism and exploitation of resources including labor, national debt, war and conflict, gender inequality, literacy levels, environmental degradation, poor human rights, unequal markets, migration, HIV/AIDS, and poor governance and leadership.

While all these factors seriously impact on poverty levels, it is now widely recognized that gender inequality is a primary cause of poverty. Seventy percent of the world's poor are female (DFID, 2000a: 13). They have limited access to services, participatory decision-making, and personal income, even though women contribute 80% of food production, for instance, in African countries. Often compounding their situation is the reality that in 1997 in the least developed countries fewer than 40% of women could read or write as compared with 60% of men. It is estimated that countries with the lowest enrollment of girls in school have gross national product (GNP) 25% lower than they might have had (DFID, 2000a: 15–16). Each additional year of female education is thought to reduce child mortality by 5–10%.

Poverty is also both a cause and a consequence of disability. DFID (2000b) estimates that 50% of disability problems are perceived as linked to poverty. Disability can be a consequence of poor health, war, and accidents. All these can lead to poverty. In terms of education, DFID claims that only 1–2% of children with disabilities receive education. When this level of education translates into adults who may be educated enough to sustain themselves, the prospects for adults who acquired their disability in childhood are meager. The shared cost of disability affects whole families, especially girls. The need for assistance in their daily lives means that most disabled people experience social exclusion as a result of practicalities and attitudes towards them and their needs. To overcome prejudice and other practical disadvantages, people with disabilities need access to higher levels of education than the basic minimum—for self-advocacy purposes, as well as to give them job market competitiveness.

4. INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TARGETS

Education, including adult education, has been identified as a key means for ensuring the reduction of poverty. As such it counts among those issues that have been targeted in the Millennium Development Goals, which were adopted by United Nations member states, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and donor agencies in 2000.

The Millennium Development Goals that are relevant to the theme of widening educational participation for poverty reduction are:

- *Poverty*: The proportion of people living in extreme poverty in developing countries and the proportion of malnourished children should be reduced by at least one-half between 1990 and 2015.
- *Education*: There should be universal primary education in all countries by 2015.
- *Gender equality*: Progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women should be demonstrated by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2015.

The Dakar Education for All goals (UNESCO, 2000) support the above with the following targets for 2015:

- Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Ensure that all children, especially girls and children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.

- Achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal participation.
- Ensure access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills.

Poverty reduction strategies have become a primary focus for the donor community. It is now a condition of donor aid that certain countries produce poverty reduction strategy programs (PRSPs) that show the proposed design and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, outlining the development outcomes and donor support needed to reach these goals by 2015.

However, current analysis of PRSPs reveals that adult education is mentioned only in ten documents, and education targets per se are given minor attention, as are gender issues (Education International, 2003; Shirley, 2003). PRSPs give priority to economic growth as a means of reducing poverty while constraining social service expansion. Strategies do include measures to promote school attendance, but Shirley and others argue that we need more of a human rights approach to poverty reduction, which addresses equality, participatory decision-making, and accountability, rather than the current focus on economics.

So how can widening educational participation contribute to poverty reduction? In the remainder of this chapter we shall explore the different dimensions and values involved in widening participation in education for social justice. We shall explore some practical examples of widening participation initiatives and discuss indicators for success.

5. STRATEGIES THAT WORK?

Øyen (2002) emphasizes that one poverty reduction approach does not fit all situations. Nevertheless, there seem to be some universal principles that engender a conducive environment for widening participation in education opportunities that contribute to poverty reduction. These include social capital-related initiatives, such as partnerships and bottom-up decision-making, networking, defining the target group, reaching people in their natural surroundings, consultation, face-to-face contact, social mobilization, advocacy and community leadership, learner support, and adequate follow-up (McGivney, 2000).

UNESCO (2002: 11) further emphasizes the need for free and compulsory primary education, which includes appropriate learning and life skills, health education and better use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), while promoting gender equity and educating for food security (UNESCO, 2002: 19–27). Social capital evolves through these networks as an additional resource, so that confidence building and training can make use of existing community structures. To address potential problems of community readiness, gender equity, and lack of infrastructure, UNESCO proposes that strategies include small-scale capacity-building ventures. These proposals follow the aforementioned goals for widening participation. Political intervention is restricted to providing adequate infrastructure, while stakeholders may be drawn from parents, community and religious leaders, school teachers, extension workers, and government agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs), the private sector, community members, and local and foreign financial institutions (UNESCO, 2002: 32–36).

Such multidimensional strategies do not just happen. They require systematic planning, good communication, and open and transparent relationships. There has to be institutional and funding support for partnerships. This may require education and training of both benefactors and beneficiaries in a way that meshes with local cultures. This approach requires political will at grassroots and central government levels. It also needs constant monitoring and evaluation support. Learning has to be relevant, collaborative, and respectful of culture and context, while also challenging all participants to work together for progress.

So, for example, as Scott-Goldman (2001) points out, literacy programs need to be organized around particular tasks or goals rather than the learner's actual literacy level. The curriculum should focus on relevant livelihood skills and encourage learner ownership of the learning content. Corley (2003) supports this approach to literacy education. Literacy is more than the acquisition of reading and writing; it is also about social practice and social currency embedded in the hidden curriculum. Literacy programs and practices must therefore be redesigned to fit various conceptions of poverty and its causes. This will include critical literacy, which helps learners make sense of what they are learning by grounding it in the context of their daily lives.

However, the introduction of ICTs as a means of increasing equality in education has met with skepticism. Spohr (2002: 93), for instance, says:

At least in the context of rural education ICT must be viewed as only a tool rather than an outcome. Especially where many children go without textbooks and schools lack even the most basic conventional teaching materials, investments in ICT must be justified by their ability to open

up new solutions, with ICT acting as one catalytic element integrated in a broader approach.

Thus, while ICT may be an additional resource for widening participation, it should not be seen as the solution. A multipronged approach is necessary.

The most successful environments for holistic, multisectoral approaches are usually supported by institutional legal frameworks and facilitating mechanisms, such as an Education Act, Education Encouragement Fund, relevant basic education curriculum, and a country comprehensive poverty reduction and growth strategy (UNESCO, 2002: 37–43). Donors, too, need to be sensitized to the benefits of this kind of work.

In addition to these measures, UNESCO advocates some practical strategies for widening participation, which formal education institutions could adopt. Some of these initiatives operate more-or-less effectively in different countries. They include introducing more flexible entry and exit routes and a “study now, pay later” fee structure. As H.S. Bhola highlights in this book, it is not enough simply to open schools and expect participation to be increased. What is needed is political will on the part of power holders and the aforementioned proactive strategies, which are effectively monitored.

Practical examples are both human- and social-capital based. They can focus on skills development, family or community education, or advocate partnerships with civil society. There are examples of best practice that are holistic and community-based. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, 2003), for example, singled out the Indian Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), which was created to assist illiterate, vulnerable, and unorganized self-employed poor rural and urban women. The project developed leadership capacities, so that the women could effectively campaign for their rights to security of employment, food, health, childcare, housing, and social security. The focus of the training was to ensure that the women knew how to build their assets. Concrete outcomes included video productions by women workers and the use of videos for training and policy action. The women now have a financially viable bank and an international network of members. Education in this kind of project is both informal (capacity- and awareness-raising) and formal (training courses). But ownership is in the hands of local people, and the focus of learning is on collective action and asset building.

A second example involves a similar mixture of informal, community action, and formal training. As noted above, people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. DFID (2000b) reports on an empowerment-building Youth India Project (YIP) in Andhra Pradesh. The YIP is an advocacy agency linked to a federation of trade unions whose aim

is to facilitate access to all areas of life for people with disabilities. Opportunities are created for people with disabilities, through union membership, to form supportive and campaigning self-help groups and awareness-building groups. The educational outcome here may not have an immediate effect on poverty reduction, but it supports social capital and ultimately access to a wider range of resources that increase autonomy and the capacity for self-direction.

Another example takes the form of a schools-based initiative (Cimadamore et al., 2002: 98–99). Here a primary school in a poor neighborhood in Argentina provides education for children and adults. The local church works in partnership with the school and an NGO that is supported by a local management committee. The committee employs teachers and administrators to provide education for skilled work. It receives funding from the state and other organizations and is described as follows (pp. 98–99):

The purpose of this project is to provide a poor neighbourhood with an educational facility which allows inhabitants to become integrated socially and workwise. Through education they can become skilled workers. And educational projects foster and consolidate positive change in the community's attitudes towards the poor . . . the project consists of a series of school facilities developed as a "public school with private management." Formal education is provided along with informal education. Education for children goes hand-in-hand with education for adults. Inhabitants of other poor neighbourhoods and other members of excluded social sectors living in the area also benefit from the project.

The principle behind the scheme is to involve residents in their own problem solving. Some of the identified indicators of success for this project are:

- increased access to all educational levels;
- increased opportunity to become a skilled worker;
- increased support for the legalizing of land possession;
- increased family participation, collaboration in activities;
- enhanced life conditions;
- increased positive change in population expectancies;
- access to higher education levels; and
- decreased violence inside school facilities.

Once again, poverty reduction and widening participation in education must be treated holistically and in a multidimensional way. Where formal training is provided, this is often alongside more informal, socially enhancing activities that show the connection and relevance of more formal learning. With a view to developing grassroots ideas for change, many of the strategies also encourage the disadvantaged to develop a greater critical awareness of how they are being disempowered.

6. CONCLUSION

In the foregoing I have argued that education is only one solution to the problem of poverty. It is increasingly understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that requires collaborative, multisectoral responses. I have proposed that a social-capital, in addition to a solely human-capital, approach to poverty reduction will produce more sustainable development. Social-capital approaches invest in holistic, pro-poor strategies for development and encourage the nurturing of community as a critical resource for sustainability. Furthermore, education that encourages critical awareness and self-advocacy, in addition to the more functionalist skills development, ensures that the skills curriculum is relevant and context-driven.

Poverty as a social justice issue requires support, not exploitation, from the rich. It also requires power sharing and a recognition of diversity. Education is but one factor in the equation. Government policies, social attitudes, and infrastructural support are all needed if the continuing divide between the haves and have-nots is to be overcome.

Strategies that are effective at local levels include participatory, democratic, awareness-raising initiatives that encourage self-help and facilitate a mixture of formal, informal, and nonformal education. Locally led initiatives are more likely to focus on cultural and curriculum relevance and draw on grassroots solutions to problems. The international community has a responsibility to recognize that it is part of the problem, as well as part of the solution for achieving the poverty reduction targets of 2015.

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Chapter 8

HIV/AIDS AS A DEPLETING FACTOR IN WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Thomas O. Fasokun

1. INTRODUCTION

The Dakar Framework for Action adopted by the international education community at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (WEF, 2000), highlights the urgent need to combat human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/AIDS throughout the world. This is imperative if the goals of “Education for All” (EFA) are to be achieved (p. 14):

The key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All . . . must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs.

All over the world HIV/AIDS is causing devastation by its destructive effects on families and communities. At the end of 2003, a report was issued by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the status of HIV/AIDS in the world (UNAIDS/WHO, 2004). The report showed that about 37 million adults (aged 15–49) and 2.5 million children (aged 0–14) were living with the HIV in different parts of the world.

During the same period, about 5 million people in different parts of the world contracted HIV, which causes AIDS, and there were about 3 million deaths from HIV/AIDS. Since the beginning of the epidemic, UNAIDS/WHO (2004) estimate that worldwide about 63 million men, women, and children have been infected with HIV and 21.8 million people have died of AIDS. This includes 4.3 million children. The epidemic hits those between 15 and 24 years of age particularly hard. This is the age group from which second- and third-level educational institutions draw the majority of their students.

At present, more than 40 million people are now living with HIV, most of whom are likely to die over the next decade or so. However, with the HIV-positive population still expanding, the annual number of AIDS deaths will continue to increase for many years.

Despite the universal ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, there is still discrimination against children infected with HIV/AIDS, for instance, when the rights of these children to education, health, and social services are denied or restricted. Children with HIV/AIDS often suffer from the effects the epidemic has on their close or extended families and their communities. The lives of children infected with HIV/AIDS become quite precarious as a result of societal and family abandonment and rejection, which forces some children to live on the streets and support themselves by such means as prostitution. Such violations of children's rights can be the result of their real or perceived HIV/AIDS status or that of members of their families; they can also make those children not already infected become more susceptible to infection. In short, the impact of the epidemic on families, households, and communities is often even greater on the young people within them.

The impact of HIV/AIDS is diverse. It affects production, as well as household incomes and expenditures. It poses major problems for health systems and health care practices. The epidemic has a severe impact on schools and education (Chilisa and Bennell, 2001; Kelly, 1999, 2000a–c). According to recent statistics from UNAIDS (2000a,b, 2002, 2003, 2004), the number of children under the age of 15 who lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS is about 14 million. Over 11 million of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa, 1.8 million in South and Southeast Asia, 85,000 in East Asia and the Pacific, while 330,000 live in Latin America. By 2001 there were 250,000 cases in the Caribbean, 65,000 in North Africa and the Middle East (UNAIDS, 2000a,b, 2002, 2003, 2004), and 3.5 million reported cases in Nigeria (Okorie, 2004). Let us now briefly examine HIV/AIDS statistics in various regions of the world, statistics that ultimately have implications for access to education.

2. PREVALENCE OF HIV/AIDS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE WORLD

Sub-Saharan Africa is the region that has the highest number of people (26.6 million) infected with HIV/AIDS in the world (O'Sullivan, 2000). In 2003, there were about 3.2 million new infections in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2002 the epidemic claimed the lives of nearly 2.3 million people. Nearly 10 million young people (aged 15–24) and almost 3 million children under

15 years of age are living with HIV (Bennell et al., 2002). In addition, there are about 11 million children who are now orphans as a result of the death of their parents through AIDS-related cases (O'Sullivan, 2004).

In Asia and the Pacific, where half of the world's population lives, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is also very high. Over 1 million people in this region were infected with HIV in 2001, bringing the number of people living with HIV to about 7.4 million (MAP, 2001). A further 500,000 people are estimated to have died of AIDS in 2003.

In the Caribbean, HIV/AIDS is affecting many people in several of the island states. Indeed, some have worse epidemics than any other country in the world outside sub-Saharan Africa. In Haiti over 6% of adults have HIV, and in the Bahamas the adult prevalence rate is over 3.5%. In the most affected countries of the Caribbean, the spread of HIV occurs through unprotected sex between men and women, although infections associated with the use of hypodermic needles are common in places such as Puerto Rico. Nearly 200,000 Haitian children have contracted the HIV (Avert.org, 2004a,b).

In Latin America the HIV epidemic is highly diverse. Most transmission in Central American countries and those along the Caribbean coast occurs through sex between men and women. Brazil is experiencing a major heterosexual epidemic, but there are also very high rates of infection among both men who have sex with men and injecting drug users. HIV/AIDS is now a common feature in Mexico, Argentina, and Colombia. The incidence of this epidemic is very slight in the Andean countries, although there are records of risky behavior in many groups (Avert.org, 2004a,b).

In the Middle East and North Africa, despite the late arrival of HIV/AIDS in this region, the trend appears to be towards increasing HIV infection rates in several places. Although rates are still at very low levels in most countries, in 2003 about 55,000 people in the region contracted HIV. This brought the total to about 600,000 people with HIV/AIDS. An estimated 45,000 people died from AIDS during 2003 (Avert.org, 2004a,b).

In Europe, statistics of the epidemic in Western Europe in 2002 showed that 14,439 new cases of HIV were reported. In Central Europe statistics showed that there were 1,427 cases with HIV infections. In 2002 there were reports of 529 AIDS cases. In East European countries there were 300,184 cases of HIV infection in 15 countries of the former Soviet Union by the end of 2002. Furthermore, the number of cases attributed to heterosexual contact has continued to increase steadily, with a 32% rise. A total of 64,222 new infections of HIV occurred in 2002. In the United Kingdom approximately 49,500 people are living with HIV/AIDS, about one-third of whom are undiagnosed and thus unaware that they are infected. Newly diagnosed cases of HIV increased by 20% between 2002 and 2003, the

increase affecting mostly women, heterosexual men, and gay men (Avert.org, 2004a,b).

In the United States, at the end of December 2001, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported approximately 362,827 persons living with AIDS. Through December 2001 there were 495,592 persons reported to the CDC as living with HIV infection or AIDS. In 1999 the CDC estimated that 800,000–900,000 persons in the United States were living with HIV or AIDS. During 2001, there were 35,575 newly diagnosed cases of HIV from 36 areas. Of the HIV reports received in 2000, 68% were among adult men, 31% were among adult women, and 1% among children under 13 years of age (Avert.org, 2004 a,b).

3. HIV/AIDS AND THE MAJOR AREAS IN WHICH EDUCATION IS DEPLETED

In light of the foregoing brief survey of the incidence of HIV/AIDS across various regions of the world, it should be clear that there is no region in the world that is completely free from the pandemic. Although there may be low visibility of the deadly disease in some regions, there is no guarantee that the disease is not spreading. The concentration of the epidemic varies from one region to another, with sub-Saharan Africa having the lion's share. There has been a marked deterioration in the educational performance of children most directly affected by HIV/AIDS. In particular, given very difficult home situations, both orphans and children in HIV/AIDS-affected households are often forced to drop out of school altogether with little chance of ever returning.

HIV/AIDS has the potential to affect in diverse ways and efforts to make education available to the people (Kelly, 1999, 2000 a–c). Due to reductions in educational demand and supply, fewer resources will be available for education. It will be necessary: to make adjustments in response to the special needs of a rapidly increasing number of orphans; to adapt to new interactions both within schools and between schools and communities; to modify curriculum and to alter the roles teachers and the educational system will have to play; to evolve new ways of organizing schools and the educational system; and to change the planning and management of educational systems drastically. Let us now examine briefly how HIV/AIDS constitutes a depleting factor in education in each of the areas just highlighted.

3.1 The demand for education

HIV/AIDS has profound consequences for schools and education (Shaeffer, 1994; Kelly, 2000a). It affects the demand for education. As

the epidemic intensifies, fewer children are born, fewer are able to afford education, and thus there will be fewer children to educate. In essence, a decline in school enrollment is one of the most visible effects of the epidemic (Avert.org, 2004b). There are greater numbers of sick children. Only few children are able to complete their schooling. As a result of this situation, only a few of them will be interested in being educated. According to Chilisa and Bennell (2001), the greatest impact experienced by those infected with and affected by the epidemic comes in the form of emotional stress, psychological trauma, demoralization, demotivation, pain and agony, and fear and anxiety, either because of sickness, nursing, or the loss of a parent, spouse, sibling, child relative, or friend. In addition, children (especially girls) leave school so as to take care of sick relatives or take on other family responsibilities. Due to the illness, household incomes and savings are depleted, and as a consequence parents will not have the means to pay for their children's education, particularly in areas where education is not completely free. Beyond this, adults see little value in investing in education for their children when the future seems bleak. In Swaziland, for example, recent statistics show that school enrollment has fallen by 36% as a result of AIDS, with girls being the most affected. In Guatemala, studies show that more than one-third of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS drop out of school (DFID et al., 2002).

3.2 The supply of education

The capacity of the educational system to supply schooling decreases as a result of the reduced productivity of sick teachers. It thus becomes increasingly difficult for educational institutions to stimulate improvement in quality and standards in education for the benefit of learners. It also becomes difficult to give priority to services and programs that will promote the desired results. What is more, teaching activities can be erratic as a result of a teacher's being personally infected or having a family member who is infected and whom they have to care for.

HIV/AIDS affects the supply of education through the death of trained teachers. In Botswana, for instance, it is estimated that about 38.8% of the adult population is infected with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2003) and between 2% and 5% of the teachers die each year from AIDS (Collins, 2004). The epidemic is claiming huge numbers of teachers, but also other education-related personnel, including education officers, inspectors, finance officers, building officers, planning officers, school managers, and support staff. As a consequence, the system's ability to match supply with demand is increasingly compromised. The number of teachers and other education-related

personnel who will die of AIDS-related illnesses may increase rapidly in high-prevalence countries during the next 10–15 years.

The epidemic is taking its toll on the quality of education: the illness itself gives rise to teacher absenteeism, which leaves less time for teaching and disrupts classroom and school schedules. When the kind of learning that can take place is affected in this way, one possible result is a lowering of aspirations and the attainment levels of people who may be easily discouraged from becoming lifelong learners. Furthermore, insofar as it is difficult (or even impossible) under these circumstances to provide a sufficiently wide range of vocational and academically flexible learning opportunities, there is likely to be less overall involvement of people in education and training. But a reduction in the number of teaching hours available and the disruption of learning are not the only effects; such illness can also lead to the cancellation of classes or even the closure of schools because of population decline in their districts and the consequent decline in enrollment. Thus in 1999 an estimated 860,000 children lost their teachers to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. By the late 1990s, the epidemic forced the closure of more than 100 educational establishments in the Central African Republic, and in 2000, AIDS was the cause of 85% of the 300 teacher deaths occurring there. In Zambia, teacher deaths caused by AIDS are equivalent to about half the total number of new teachers trained annually (DFID et al., 2002).

3.3 The resources for education

HIV/AIDS affects the availability of resources for education. The quality of education diminishes as a result of overstressing already scarce human, financial, and material resources. In heavily affected areas, there will be fewer teachers working; those who are working will be less motivated and frequently absent if they must respond to family trauma or illness; and many families will experience a decline in purchasing power, making expenditures related to schooling impossible (Chilisa and Bennell, 2001). In some cases, sick but inactive teachers who cannot attend classes tie-up funds by remaining on the payroll, funds that could otherwise be used to pay the salaries of active teachers.

The availability of public and private resources for the provision of education is always limited. But family incomes may become reduced as well, for instance, when family resources have to be diverted to medical care. Parents and guardians will be poorer because of the macroeconomic impacts of HIV/AIDS. They will be less able, therefore, to support their children's schooling through the payment of fees, purchase of supplies, and so on (Kelly, 1999, 2000a–c).

3.4 The potential clientele for education

Improving the quality of education is a key policy objective in many countries (Smith, 2002). Major education reforms are underway around the world in response to demands to make lifelong learning opportunities available to all. However, when children below the age of 15 lose a mother or father or both, this goal becomes unrealizable. As the numbers of orphans, caregivers, and children with AIDS-related illnesses increase, the educational performance of these children is likely to deteriorate. More specifically, intake rates could fall and repetition and dropout rates increase. The orphans place a massive strain on the extended family and the public welfare services. A standard coping strategy when there is parental death is to take some or all of the offspring out of school, largely because of the difficulty the surviving family experiences in meeting school costs. In addition, children, that is, girls or boys aged 14 or less head many households. There is the need for children who are heading households, orphans, the poor, girls, and street children to undertake income-generating activities (Kelly, 1999, 2000a–c).

3.5 The process of education

Education has long accompanied democracy since it gives people the necessary skills, knowledge, and assurance to make participation in democracy possible and thereby meaningful. However, the freedom of education and thus the vitality of democracy are in jeopardy due to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in many communities (Kelly, 1999, 2000a–c).

It is now becoming increasingly difficult for teachers to follow the process of education effectively by sharing their experiences and innovations with their pupils and colleagues. Sickesses arising from the pandemic prevent them from raising and discussing issues of academic relevance to them and their pupils. This is simply because the morale of both infected and affected teachers and pupils is low (Chilisa and Bennell, 2001). People are no longer interested in seeking help from academics and fellow teachers to improve their mastery over content and to analyze and perfect their classroom interactions. In addition, school personnel often do not invest their time and energy to understand issues related to the education of children, issues that could lead to effective curriculum development and implementation.

School personnel will not be fully interested in maintaining self-discipline to foster a calm, well-ordered atmosphere. Most staff will become less interested in and take little or no responsibility for the maintenance of discipline, especially in their own classrooms. There will be little or no

enthusiasm on the part of school personnel to notify superiors or the child's parents about any persistent problems the pupil may have or serious offences he or she may have committed. In addition, they will not show any willingness to invite the parents into school to discuss the matter.

Pupils will not have adequate opportunities to choose from among several extracurricular activities each term. Schools will not seek to foster enjoyment of sport either by the development of skills within the curriculum or as an extracurricular activity (in competitive and non-competitive settings). Outside the curriculum the school will not be encouraged to offer a range of sporting activities, such as football, gymnastics, and athletics.

3.6 The organization of schools

Infected and affected school personnel, especially the experienced and well-qualified teaching staff, find it difficult to participate efficiently and effectively in the organization of their schools (Kelly, 1999, 2000a–c). This situation could pose a major organizational challenge and threat for the organization of various schools. Unless appropriate measures are taken, the morale, motivation, and overall performance of all teachers and support personnel could be seriously undermined. In any school organization, an orderly, disciplined teaching and learning environment is vital to the success of any school. This will be difficult to achieve if schools adopt flexible timetables or calendars that are more responsive to the income-generating burdens that many pupils must now shoulder. Pupils infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS will not have the highest personal and academic aspirations and therefore will be less likely to value their membership in the school that tries to support them fully in all they seek to achieve.

On the other hand, it will be difficult for schools to provide an all-round education for infected pupils. Such pupils will not be willing to participate in extracurricular activities on and off school grounds, which will inhibit opportunities to expand their horizons. It may become necessary to establish schools that are closer to the homes of such pupils.

The problems orphans have in attending regular schools indicate that it is necessary for schools to operate on more flexible timetables, which can accommodate the special needs of orphans, street children, and those whom AIDS-related causes have induced to abandon the regular school system (Kelly, 1999, 2000a–c). In other words, it will be necessary to provide for orphans and children from infected families, for whom regular school attendance is impossible, by bringing the school to them instead of requiring them to come to the school.

3.7 The planning and management of the educational system

The pandemic requires a management framework with committed, well-informed leadership in the schools. Such leadership should recognize the gravity of the situation and thus ensure the need for sustained action planning and a management approach that anticipates the impact of the epidemic on learners, educators, and the educational system. Such leadership will be democratic but will also seek out broad-based management partnerships, which recognize that the education sector cannot do everything on its own but must work in close cooperation with a wide range of partners. Appropriate policies, guidelines, and regulations must be put into place to help personnel to deal with the varied aspects of HIV/AIDS. And to be successful in all these respects, adequate human, material, and financial resources must be provided.

4. CONCLUSION

Hernes (2004) explains that HIV/AIDS is “increasing poverty, reducing equity, weakening human rights, undercutting education and undermining good governance.” He paints an extremely grim picture of the current rates of infection. HIV/AIDS is wiping out decades of investment in education and human development. Teacher shortages and increased pressures for children to drop out to care for sick adults are only a few examples of its impact. “Children and youth are at risk on an unparalleled scale,” he adds. In some countries more than one-third of the 15-year-olds will die of AIDS-related illnesses in coming years.

Hernes stresses the importance of preventive education, which is about changing attitudes and behaviors of people, education that should start early, before young people are sexually active. To be able to embark on effective and efficient preventive education, teachers need proper training, as well as good teaching materials; they also need a supportive environment, a receptive community, and political commitment.

We cannot achieve EFA goals and the Millennium Development Goals for Education without serious action that addresses the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector. To achieve these goals and thus combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic, governments, organizations, agencies, groups, and associations should implement education programs and actions. This becomes imperative because HIV/AIDS places the education system in great jeopardy. HIV/AIDS erodes the human capacity for education and compromises educational outcomes. The impact of HIV/AIDS on the

educational system must be mitigated. To achieve this, measures must be adopted to ensure that the system and its institutions continue to work so that learners have access to high quality education by sufficient numbers of well-qualified teachers.

The curriculum should provide good quality sexual health education at all levels of education in ways that are appropriate to the learners' stages of development. This should include understanding the nature of the HIV infection and knowing what behaviors to avoid in order to reduce the risks posed by the epidemic. To this end, it is necessary to give adequate care and support to the infected and affected pupils. This has to be achieved if HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination are to be eliminated. It is necessary to ensure that every educational institution is free from all forms of violence and sexual abuse. Special measures must be adopted to ensure that orphans and young people affected by the epidemic can access educational provision and can perform to the best of their abilities. There is the urgent need to provide more widespread psychosocial and youth-friendly health services to those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

At the same time, it is necessary to address issues of human rights and relationships based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child for children who are living in a world afflicted with HIV/AIDS. It must be recognized that children have a right to survival and development. They must therefore be protected from the impact of HIV/AIDS and provided with opportunities to develop their life skills. Children have a right to a safe and supportive environment free from exploitation and abuse. Special measures should therefore be taken to prevent and minimize the impact of HIV/AIDS caused by sexual abuse and trafficking, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation, use of illicit drugs, harmful traditional practices, etc.

Children must be protected from discrimination and exploitation, irrespective of their HIV/AIDS status or that of members of their families. They should not suffer on any grounds because of their HIV/AIDS status. If there is to be success here, constant attention should be paid to the plight of the orphans to ensure that they receive adequate support services.

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Chapter 9

THE DIALECTICS OF POVERTY, EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND ICTS

Olutoyin Mejiuni and Oluyemisi Obilade

1. INTRODUCTION

With respect to widening access to education, we understand social justice to mean ensuring fair distribution of resources for education in a way that will help disadvantaged persons to benefit; giving all people equal opportunities to access education; and establishing mechanisms for achieving equality of outcome of educational opportunities, while recognizing that equal treatment will not always result in equal outcomes.

In this chapter we examine the contradictions in play between, on the one hand, the potential that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have to be the major means of widening access to education and, on the other hand, the inhibiting, restraining, and constraining effects that poverty has on the abilities of persons and groups to access and make effective use of ICTs, especially the newer ones. ICTs are electronic and non-electronic technologies, infrastructure, systems, and services used to publish, store, retrieve, and transmit information, to communicate ideas, and to generate knowledge. They provide the means by which to propagate and receive ideas. ICTs are both traditional (such as radio, television, dance, drama, folklore, print, and fax) and new (such as the Internet, the World Wide Web, electronic mail, teleconferencing, and distance learning tools such as CD-ROMs) (Marcelle cited in UNDP, 2000).

Concerns about widening access to education through ICTs focus on three areas. First, how to make information available on ICTs that can lead to knowledge. It has been observed that information can become knowledge only if it helps people to participate in decision-making and allows them to make informed choices (Nath cited in UNDP, 2000), which can lead to changes in attitudes and behavior, hopefully in a positive direction. Connected with this is the interest in helping people to benefit from and participate in open learning. Open learning can be achieved by accessing the information that, for example, the United Nations websites and online

journals provide. When discussions by stakeholders and documentaries on special issues (farming, medicine, indigenous knowledge, reduction of violence towards women, environment, peace building, poverty reduction, equity, etc.) are available to people on the radio, television, and Internet, such discussions and documentaries can give rise to open learning. Finally, concerns about expanding access to education through ICTs focus on making more structured instruction available to people from all walks of life, through prepackaged courses delivered through correspondence education, videotapes, CD-ROMs, radio and television, and courses delivered through the Internet and teleconferencing. This is distance learning.

2. POTENTIALS OF ICTS FOR WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

ICTs have the capacity to reach and stimulate large audiences across vast distances, and this increases the possibility that more people can have access to education. Clearly, no teacher–student or learner–instructor relationship in formal settings can ever have as much impact on so many people (at the same time) in terms of access as ICTs. Information, open learning, and distance learning on ICTs can also complement learning in formal settings—educational institutions, formal workplaces, etc (UNESCO, 2002c).

ICTs possess the capacity to take education into the living rooms and workplaces of people who, for economic, sociocultural, political, or psychological reasons, are unable to take advantage of education in formal settings (Maduka, 1991; UNESCO, 2002a). For some people, learning through ICTs can be cheaper, in economic terms (linked to prioritization of needs), than attending formal school. We also note, for example, that the lifestyle of nomads (children, youths, and adults) may make it impossible for them to take full advantage of formal schooling and literacy classes (Ezeomah, 2000). In a case such as this, ICTs can both provide alternatives to formal education and complement formal education. Women who are too busy with domestic work, work outside the home, or other social responsibilities, may not be able to access education in formal settings. In addition, some indigenous/First Nations communities, women, and poor people fear schools and feel vulnerable in schools since for them schools represent authority that impose particular worldviews, devalue their persons and their knowledge, and make them feel unworthy and unwanted and thus out of place in schools (Maduka, 1991; Luttrell, 1997). For this group of people, information, discussions, and prepackaged materials, on television and radio and in newspapers, that value and reflect their real life experiences can be used to supplement formal education and may be an alternative to learning in formal settings, at least until schools have been restructured. While schools threaten (or appear to threaten)

some individuals and groups, stakeholders who are interested in helping disadvantaged persons to gain access to education can actively encourage the use of ICTs to deliver nonformal education to these groups. Linked to this is the belief that ICTs allow individuals flexibility in the choice of what they want to learn, the scheduling of their learning program, and the organization of learning materials (UNESCO, 2002a).

It will be useful here to take a cursory look at some ICTs and their potentials for widening access to education. The print media combines written symbols with visual images and do not set any particular pace for readers. They have lasting power because people can refer to them again and again, either to start a process of knowledge acquisition or to refresh their memories. Accessed through computers, the Internet, World Wide Web, and e-mail combine the advantages of speed and instant communication with those of broadcasting, publishing, and interactivity. Compact discs are handy. They can store huge amounts of text and images and can easily be distributed widely. Clearly, these ICTs have great potential for widening access to education. It is therefore not surprising that UNESCO (2002b: 1) observed that “the use of Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) in and for education is rapidly expanding in many countries, and is now seen worldwide as both a necessity and an opportunity.”

3. POVERTY AND ACCESS TO ICTS: DATA RELEVANT TO ACCESS TO AND EFFECTIVE USE OF ICTS

In many of the countries with a low Human Development Index (HDI)—for example, Pakistan and Nigeria—most of the people live in rural areas. According to figures from 2000, about 64% of Pakistanis and 55% of Nigerians lived in rural areas. Public expenditure (as a percentage of total government expenditure) on education was 7.1% in Pakistan and 11.5% in Nigeria between 1995 and 1997. Adult illiteracy rates were high for both Pakistan and Nigeria, but especially for Pakistan, where 56.8% of adults were illiterate as of 2000. Only 22 out of 1,000 Pakistanis and 4 out of 1,000 Nigerians had access to telephone mainlines as of 2000. There are no figures available for both countries on the number of people that were linked to Internet hosts in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, Nigeria was supposed to have expended 0.1% of its gross national product (GNP) on research and development; only 15 out of every one million Nigerians are scientists and engineers involved in research and development (UNDP, 2002). Also significant is that 84.6% of Pakistanis and 90.8% of Nigerians survived on less than US\$2 a day between 1983 and 2000. Table 9-1 provides

Table 9-1. Human development indicators relevant to accessing and making effective use of ICTs—a comparison of seven countries.

HDI rank	Countries	Adult illiteracy rate (% age 15 and above)	Population below income poverty line (% US\$2 a day)	Urban population (as % of total)	Public education expenditure (as % of total government expenditure)	Population using improved water sources (%)	Telephone main lines (per 1,000 people)	Internet hosts (per 1,000 people)	Research and development expenditures (as % of GNP)	Scientists and engineers in research and development (per million people)
		2000	1983–2000	2000	1995–1997	2000	2000	2000	1990–2000	1990–2000
1	Norway	–	–	74.7	16.8	100	532	101.1	1.7	4,095
3	Canada	–	–	78.7	12.9	100	677	77.4	1.7	3,009
18	Ireland	–	–	59	13.5	–	420	29.7	1.5	2,132
69	Venezuela	7.4	47	86.9	22.4	84	108	0.7	0.3	194
77	Philippines	4.7	–	58.6	15.7	87	40	0.3	0.2	156
138	Pakistan	56.8	84.6	33.1	7.1	88	22	–	–	78
148	Nigeria	36.1	90.8	44.1	11.5	57	4	–	0.1	15

Source: UNDP (2002).

a comparison of the HDIs of countries with high, medium, and low HDIs. These indicators have implications for whether the people concerned can access ICTs and whether they will be able to make effective use of ICTs if and when they are available.

In addition, all around the world, more women than men expend more time working on nonmarket activities. Such activities include household maintenance (cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, and clean-up), management and shopping for their own household, care for children, the sick, the elderly, and the disabled in their own household, and community services (UNDP, 2002). However, the time that women in the global-economic South expend on nonmarket activities is surely higher because of a lack of basic infrastructure, such as electricity and water supply. In rural areas, women and children (mostly girls) haul water from streams, wells, and a few public taps. In urban centers, the conditions are very much the same, except that there are usually fewer streams from which they can haul water. This means that in the South, women and children expend more time on nonmarket activities. Electricity supply to the urban centers in Nigeria is erratic, and many communities in rural areas are still not connected to the national grid. Women and girls in the rural areas expend time on fetching firewood for cooking, while in urban centers even women who can afford to own refrigerators have to spend a great deal of time shopping, because they are unable to stock the refrigerators sufficiently due to the erratic power supply. Likewise in Nigeria, women are under much pressure to participate in preparations of family get-togethers, which eat up time.

4. POVERTY CONSTRAINS ACCESS TO, AND EFFECTIVE USE OF ICTS

From the data presented above, it appears that people who are most in need of gaining access to education through ICTs are neither going to have access to ICTs (the new ones in particular) nor are they going to be able to make effective use of them, essentially, due to poverty, that is, because they live below poverty line, and they are vulnerable, powerless, and fearful.

Many people in the South live below the poverty line (US\$2 and below; UNDP, 2002); they expend most of their income on food—one indication of poverty (Nwosu, 2000)—leaving no money to invest in the education available through ICTs. Consider, for example, radio and television in Nigeria. Whereas the radio is a popular medium with rural dwellers in Nigeria, for the majority who are poor, running their radios can be expensive. This is because most of the communities are not connected to the national grid, and so they have to run their radios on batteries. This goes for

televisions, too. The new ICTs (Internet access and CD-ROMs) are usually not found in the rural areas. Internet cafes in urban centers run on commercial basis, and since people who want to make profits have doubts about the viability of Internet cafes in rural areas, they do not even attempt to do business there. Significantly, for people in the urban centers of a country where 90.1% of the population lives on US\$2 a day, it is difficult for them to expend between 90 and 150 Nigerian Naira (about US\$1) to access the Internet for an hour for educational purposes. This is also true for the urban poor, indigenous/First Nations communities and ethnic/racial minorities in the global-economic North. Due to poverty, which is linked to their social status in their countries, many do not have access to ICTs or are unable to make effective use of them when they are available.

Women in all parts of the world, but especially in the South, suffer double jeopardy. The unequal power relations in many societies make it difficult for women to gain access to ICTs or make effective use of them when they are available. In this connection, some of the barriers that have been identified are: lower levels of literacy and education, including training in languages that are predominantly used in ICT platforms and the Internet; less time due to women's triple role of domestic, productive, and community management responsibilities, which means having a much longer work day than men have and less access to financial resources to cover the cost of equipment and access; and geographical location: in developing countries, women tend to live in rural areas. Infrastructure is less dependable in the rural areas, and travel to ICT centers is more difficult due to cost, time, and cultural reasons (Huyer and Sikoska, 2003).

Berdichevsky and Shettle (2001) observed that the World Health Organization (WHO) puts the number of persons with disabling hearing impairments at 250 million worldwide, but that two-thirds of them live in developing countries. Regarding access to and use of ICTs by deaf people, they observed that whereas deaf people in the United States are benefiting from the technological advances of that country (they cited the use of special phone equipment called TTY), deaf people in developing countries are still cut off from society. Berdichevsky and Shettle cited the World Federation of the Deaf's estimate of high illiteracy rates among deaf people in developing nations because fewer than 20% of deaf children attended school regularly. In addition, when attempts have been made to network deaf individuals and organizations that wish to work with them (to promote self-empowerment), they have met with a number of problems, including a lack of computers, a lack of electricity in rural areas, a lack of time for learners to participate in the networks because they have to earn a living (at times some juggle two jobs to survive), nonfunctioning phone lines, and nonexistent public transportation.

5. MORE CONCERNS ABOUT POVERTY

Another strand of poverty's interface with the accessing of and effective use of ICTs is the concern about who produces the information/knowledge that ICTs disseminate, whose knowledge they disseminate, who controls the ICTs, who benefits from such control, and what such control means regarding whether marginalized persons and groups can access and make effective use of ICTs. These concerns have attracted the attention (and stirred the emotions) of scholars and activists from the North and the South, as well as international economic and financial institutions. UNESCO (2002b: 1) pinpointed some of these concerns when it noted that, regarding the use of ICTs for education, it is imperative to tackle "questions of ownership of knowledge, the increasing exchange of education as a commodity, and globalization of education in relation to cultural diversity."

Undoubtedly, most of the information/knowledge disseminated via the new ICTs to most parts of the South comes from the North. Moreover, most information has a bias and is passed on in the hope that it will come to be regarded as knowledge. Information is produced with a particular audience in view and for a specific purpose. Thus it is value-laden; it carries the cultural baggage and reflects the cultural context of those who produce it. This means that to a large extent those in the South who receive information/knowledge from the North are tacitly expected to begin to see the world through the eyes of the North and seek to make sense of life much as someone from the North would do.

One result is that many people in the South are beginning to adopt ways of thinking and lifestyles from the West (read the North). Given the changes brought about by the interaction of Western lifestyles (channeled through ICTs) with their own traditional value systems, some in the South have difficulties making sense of the world. Still others resent what they perceive to be intrusions on their knowledge systems and ways of life. Some of this resentment derives from feelings of vulnerability to what is perceived to be the self-serving discourse of those who initiate and disseminate the information. At the heart of such feelings is fear, which may be fear of the unknown or of resistance (by a dominant group) to (perceived) attempts to empower persons whom the groups have been dominating. Thus, in the context of what is sometimes said to be a homogenization of cultural diversity by the North through ICTs, when structural barriers such as low income levels and patriarchy prevent people from accessing education through ICTs, these people will be unable to overcome some of these barriers because of vulnerability to and fear of what ICTs have to offer or what they are thought to offer. In a sense, then, this means that even if people have

access to ICTs, they may be unable to make effective use of them due to fear and vulnerability.

Unfortunately, the same groups of people who are unable to access formal education and education through ICTs for reasons of low income, patriarchy, and neglect are the ones whose knowledge systems are thought to be and are treated as marginal, whose knowledge and ways of living are commercialized when they are “discovered,” and who do not control ICTs, especially the newer ones. Those most seriously affected are poor people in the South: women, ethnic/racial minorities, First Nations communities, and people with disabilities.

6. ENSURING ACCESS TO AND EFFECTIVE USE OF ICTS

Clearly there have been attempts all over the world to address some of the concerns that have been raised in the foregoing. UNESCO’s support for Community Multimedia Centers (CMC) and Multipurpose Community Telecenters are some of the recent initiatives. They follow the patterns of radio listening groups and television viewing centers of the 1970s and 1980s. According to UNESCO (2002a), “A CMC combines community radio by local people in local languages with community telecenters facilities (computers with Internet and e-mail, phone, fax, and photocopying facilities). The radio—which is low cost and easy to operate—not only informs, educates, and entertains, but it also empowers the community by giving a strong public voice to the voiceless, and thus encouraging greater accountability in public affairs.” In addition to UNESCO and other international financial institutions that are involved in capacity building and funding initiatives, there are also private funding agencies that hope to use access to ICTs to help disadvantaged groups and communities to realize their potential.

Given the population that is yet to be reached by ICTs, however, these efforts are drops of water in the ocean. Because the problem of access will persist for some time, there is a constant need to mobilize existing assets and resources within communities and, outside communities, for the *provision* of ICTs that can expand access to education. Furthermore, it is crucial that individual skills and talents, the resources of community associations, religious groups, cooperative thrift and credit unions, women’s organizations and voluntary organizations within communities, be harnessed. They will serve not just to *mobilize* members to use ICTs but also as platforms through which *people can participate in the process of producing knowledge and disseminating the knowledge* through those ICTs that work well for local individuals and

groups. Tax-deductible donations by big commercial outfits and funding by international and multilateral institutions can then be used to fund initiatives that emanate from the communities and build the capacity of those communities.

Finally, the key to ensuring access to and effective use of ICTs for widening access to education is to improve the economic, sociocultural, political environment of ICTs, as well as the entire social justice environment. This is necessary because, as long as inequalities and unequal relations of power persist within and among groups in a particular society, there will be a continuous unequal access to ICTs and ineffective use of ICTs when and where they are available.

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Chapter 10

UNESCO POLICIES AND CONFERENCES: WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION TO FURTHER SOCIAL JUSTICE

Adama Ouane and Christine Glanz

This chapter discusses the concept of social justice in education and its implications for access to education. It shows that social justice is more than simply access to an educational system. We believe that current debates about the right to participate in quality and empowering learning tend to employ a narrow concept of social justice. The debates should not be satisfied that access is the main issue but should widen their scope by considering the overarching issue of the right to quality learning and the right to participate in and contribute to the creation of a learning society.

In what follows, we shall discuss critically UNESCO's activities in this field in their historical development by highlighting the Organization's central policy instruments and their theoretical, as well as practical, contributions to the widening of access to education to further social justice.

1. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

It has been UNESCO's mandate since 1945 to promote justice together with its member states.

Justice, as defined by the Brockhaus Encyclopedia (1997), is a basic ethical value treated by legal and social philosophy. Hillmann (1994) points out that, since the term "justice" reflects an ideal value, its definitions vary according to ideologies, social status, and personal interests. Furthermore, the Brockhaus Encyclopedia (1997) distinguishes social justice from justice, for example, by connecting social justice to human development,¹ and

¹The human development approach starts from the individual and focuses "on the progress of human lives and well-being"; "human development is integrally connected with enhancing certain capabilities—the range of things a person can do and be in leading a life" (UNDP, 2000: 19).

separating it from human rights, the self-determination of societies, and the general question of peace. Social justice in this sense takes the individual as the point of departure.

Fraser (2000) defines social justice in broader terms by merging two concepts that in many debates are seen as antithetical: namely, social justice as redistribution and recognition. Social justice as egalitarian redistribution is a matter of *politico-economical restructuring*; it seeks “a more just distribution of resources and goods” (Fraser, 2000: 48). Social justice as recognition is a matter of *status change*; it envisions a “difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect” (p. 48). For Fraser the core principles of both are parity of participation and equality,² that is, permitting all adults in a society to interact with each other as peers. Thus, applying the principles of social justice to access to education implies nondiscriminatory, inclusive, and participatory educational policies. Since UNESCO’s approach to justice corresponds to Fraser’s definition of social justice, this chapter takes its bearing by it.

2. UNESCO’S MANDATE FOR JUSTICE

According to the UNESCO constitution, adopted in London in 1945, UNESCO has the mandate to “further universal respect for justice.” Promoting justice is therefore a core ethical concern of UNESCO’s activities. Article 1 of the UNESCO constitution states that *furthering universal respect for justice* is a task for UNESCO in order to contribute to world-wide peace and security.

Article 1: Purposes and functions

The purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations. (Art. 1; UNESCO, 2002a: 8)

To fulfill its mandate, UNESCO employs a variety of approaches, in its function as a *coordinator* of its member states. One of these is to further

²In general, the term “parity” refers to quantitative aspects and the term “equality” refers to qualitative aspects. “Participation” is an element of the human development approach and stands for social freedom. Social freedom is defined as “the capability to participate in the life of the community, to join in public discussion, to participate in political decision-making and even the elementary ability to appear in public without shame” (UNDP, 2000: 19–20).

international dialogue among its currently 190 member states³ through conferences and research, and to develop policies or standard-setting instruments based on this dialogue. It is UNESCO's duty to help to crystallize the views of its member states. Policy instruments of UNESCO and its member states include conventions, declarations, recommendations, and action plans. Some key instruments are presented below with reference to their implications for engendering social justice.

UNESCO's quest for justice has led in recent years to commitments to education for all, communication for all, and clean water for all. They are encapsulated in its various program priorities. Literacy, for example, has always been perceived as a precondition for empowering the poor and disadvantaged, as well as for creating conducive factors for promoting social justice and widening people's choices and opportunities.

3. NONDISCRIMINATION AS SOCIAL JUSTICE

UNESCO's call for "Education for All" on a nondiscriminative basis exemplifies Fraser's notion of social justice: the *World Declaration on Education for All* (1990) strives in principle to secure access and participation for everyone. The rejection of discrimination puts all human beings on the same level as respectable and equal partners in education. Inclusive education for all has been UNESCO's priority since its early drive for fundamental education in the 1940s and 1950s, its promotion of the "Education for All" movement,⁴ and the subsequent commitment contained in the *Dakar Framework for Action* (Peppler Barry, 2000) adopted at the World Education Forum (UNESCO, 2000).⁵ UNESCO's values regarding access to education reflect Fraser's definition of social justice, which links redistribution and recognition. Such a programmatic approach strives to keep international dialogue moving in line with inclusive and participatory educational policies.

UNESCO's vision of social justice and education (e.g., Faure et al., 1972; Delors, 1996) comes close to what Heimbach-Steins (2003) calls "participatory justice." On the one hand, participatory justice opens the possibility for the individual to participate in society and, on the other, requires the individual to take responsibility (Heimbach-Steins, 2003). To achieve this, the individual needs to be able to equip him- or herself with relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and must have the opportunity to

³For a list of Member States see UNESCO's website: <http://www.unesco.org>.

⁴See, e.g., UNESCO's website: <http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/>, accessed on January 27, 2005.

⁵See, e.g., UNESCO's website: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/index.shtml, accessed on January 27, 2005.

develop his or her potential (abilities, talents, etc.). In this context education as a foundation for social participation embraces all measures and processes undertaken in a society to provide its members with the necessary framework and resources to enable participation.

The ultimate goal is that society's members be able to organize their lives and contribute as responsible members to a more humane and sustainable development of their society. This idea is encapsulated in the principle of "Learning to be," as described in a UNESCO report prepared by International Commission on Education chaired by Edgar Faure et al. (1972). The four pillars of learning ("learning to do," "learning to know," "learning to be," and "learning to live together") formulated in a similar report prepared by the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century chaired by Jacques Delors (Delors et al., 1996) expand the "learning to be principle." (For a critique of the Delors report, see Watson (1999).) The formulation of the four pillars can be taken as a public statement on the principles of lifelong education and learning, which support widening access to education by a flexible organization of education and recognition of informal and nonformal learning. (See also Coombs and Ahmad (1974) and La Belle (1982) on informal, non-formal, and formal education.) Furthermore, the four-pillar concept integrates new curricular concerns, such as health, culture, environment, citizenship, and leisure (Field, 2000). The overall philosophy with respect to social justice is here that the path to participation is twofold: (i) the provision of equal access to education, and (ii) equal treatment *within* the educational system.

Heimbach-Steins (2003) asks whether education can really provide the foundation for participation and can be an option for people with a low social status. On the basis of her analysis of a successful South African educational program developed and managed by poor black families, she concludes that basic education improves the lives of marginalized social groups to a limited but worthwhile extent. The limitation is at a societal level because a single educational program does not change the generally low social status of its beneficiaries. Their status is bound to a social system whose asymmetric power relations, unequal access to economic resources, and ideological patterns consolidate injustice. This example indicates that more access to education (redistribution dimension of social justice) alone does not bring about social justice, but that it must be connected to a change of the given social system in its entirety (recognition dimension of social justice). All studies on participation in education, especially in adult education, confirm this observation by showing that people with higher and better education are usually those with a higher social status. They benefit more from educational offers and express their learning needs and demands.

To engender social justice, marginalized sections of societies need to be promoted and protected by measures against discrimination for both access to education and just treatment within the system. Article 7 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* defines nondiscrimination regarding race,

gender, language, religion, economic, cultural or social distinctions, and physical disabilities. UNESCO transferred this article to a legally binding *Convention against Discrimination in Education* (1960). This convention is fundamental to all subsequent UNESCO instruments and activities.

“Learning to live together,” one of the four pillars identified in the Delors report, offers another approach to recognition based on dialogue and understanding. It strongly expresses the view that learning should enable human beings to “understand others and their history, traditions and spiritual values, the aim being to encourage people to implement common projects and to manage conflicts intelligently and peacefully” (UNESCO, 2002b: 11). “Learning to live together” is thus an educational goal that aims at changing patterns of discriminatory behavior. This slogan highlights cohesion and integration as possible outcomes of education: “Education can promote cohesion if it strives to take the diversity of individuals and groups into consideration while taking care that it does not itself contribute to social exclusion” (Delors et al., 1996: 56).

This is easier said than done. Shaeffer (1994) stresses that striving for more participation and equality—thus for more social justice—means preparing for a major challenge, which is ideological and social change. Rejection of such change by those who would have to share power and decision-making is a common phenomenon. “Participation” is a value that has advantages in practice but that also generates problems and risks (Shaeffer, 1994: 25):

It is important to make clear that participation—and any accompanying devolution of authority and “empowerment of the masses”—should not be seen as a new panacea for underdevelopment. It is a difficult, frustrating process, sometimes risky and often unsustainable; both sceptics and advocates of participatory development recognize that it is a process fraught with disappointments, dangers, and unkept promises.

A participatory approach requires that normative, international approaches, such as in international cooperation and comparative studies, be supported by contextual interpretation. For instance, the UNDPs Human Development Index (HDI) has made it possible in part to overcome the limitations attached to indicators such as the GDP by increasing concern for social justice and contextual relevance.

4. ESTABLISHING EDUCATION AS A RIGHT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

A significant strategy that anchors the value “social justice” in educational systems is to make education a right for all human beings. The first step in this direction was taken in Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UNESCO, 1950). Human rights “share the characteristic of

entailing some entitlement to help from others in defence of one's substantive freedoms" (UNDP, 2000: 20).

Since the declaration of the right to education was issued,⁶ most debates and policies regarding education have been inspired by it. In this context, most of the international instruments for education—conventions, declarations, recommendations, frameworks for action, and charters (Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [1966], which was drafted at the suggestion of UNESCO's Director-General [UNESCO and Economic Social Council, 2003])—have been initiated by UNESCO since 1945.

Such normative documents fulfill different functions. Conventions, as opposed to declarations, have a legally binding character. They therefore succeed declarations such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in order to transfer the declaration into a legal framework. Conventions are followed by other texts that specify and update them. Such follow-up texts include declarations, recommendations, and programs of action, which are not legally binding but nevertheless are of political importance. They are intended to be "a reference and a guide for governments, international organizations, bilateral agencies, NGOs and all those committed to the goal of education for all" (Daudet and Singh, 2001: 17).

There are several conventions and other texts significant for furthering the right to education and social justice. An early and fundamental one, the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* (1960) connects the general principle of nondiscrimination expressed in Article 7 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* with Article 26, the right to education, in order to exclude discrimination from education. Such discrimination would be any distinction, exclusion, limitation, or preference that, being based on race, color, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, economic status or birth, might impair equality of treatment in education of any kind (*Convention against Discrimination in Education*, UNESCO, 1960: Art. 1; see Daudet and Singh, 2001). Nondiscrimination also includes the right of parents to choose an educational institution for their children. However, in recent research doubts have been expressed about the effectiveness of choice because parents' choices are constrained by many factors and do not

⁶Article 26.1: Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Article 26.2: Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. Article 26.3: Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (UNESCO, 1950).

remedy larger issues of socioeconomic problems (Plank and Sykes, 1999). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the convention against discrimination provides the basis for UNESCO's normative instruments. Later texts support the rules and principles laid out in it—for example, the *Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All* (1990) and the *Dakar Framework for Action* (2000), which set goals to universalize access to education and promote equity.

Other UNESCO policy documents for the promotion of social justice, together with the universal right to education, include the *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education* (1989) and the *World Declaration on Higher Education* (1998). Below, the types of policy for access to education that are promoted by both standard-setting instruments are briefly outlined.

4.1 1989: UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education

In addition to Article 26, the convention refers to the right to work and to nondiscrimination (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, UNESCO, 1950: Art. 23 and 7). The combination of these rights in a convention makes adequate technical and vocational education for youth and adults a right and an instrument for social justice. Article 2.1 of the convention outlines the reasons and goals for such policies and their implementation. It is argued that ensuring access to technical and vocational education is crucial for “economic and social development,” as well as for the “personal and cultural fulfillment of the individual in society.” Discrimination of those who have the educational qualifications for technical and vocational education is regarded as an offence against the convention. Therefore, equality of opportunity to study and the right to equal access in the framework of lifelong education are the guiding principles (Art. 2.3 and 3).

4.2 1998: World Declaration on Higher Education

The declaration promotes “equity of access” by the principle of individual merit, which is upheld as the guiding principle in matters of access to higher education. Thus there should be no exclusion from higher education of people who show “capacity, efforts, perseverance, and devotion,” and their previously acquired skills should be recognized. This guiding principle is based on Article 26.1 of the right to education (UNESCO, 1950).

The declaration is followed by a *Framework for Priority Action*, which looks at how the declaration could be implemented. As for widening access

to higher education, different measures are proposed. An important one is that institutions of higher education are called upon to change their exclusionary ideologies and structures so as to facilitate inclusion—for example, by (i) ensuring that credits are transferable, (ii) recognizing prior learning, and (iii) developing learner-centered curricula. Several articles of the declaration refer to quality in higher education (see, e.g., Art. 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11).

The problem with implementing recommendations and rights lies not only with member states but also with international development policies, especially programs designed to adjust social structures. An example from higher education in Africa is that the policies of structural adjustment designed to achieve macroeconomic equilibrium and to promote growth recommended only Universal Primary Education and, counterproductively, a cut in investment and scholarships in secondary and higher education, which hindered poor students from attending universities. Low quality education for the poor seriously undermines the idea of social justice. Unfortunately, UNESCO did not oppose these trends strongly and effectively enough, although the right to education as social justice has been recommended many times—for example, in the 1985 declaration adopted by the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA IV). This declaration stipulated that the right to education “is a fundamental human right whose legitimacy is universal: the right to learn cannot be confined to one section of humanity: it must not be the exclusive privilege of men, or of the industrialized countries, or the wealthy classes, or those young people fortunate enough to receive schooling” (UNESCO, 1985: 67).

The right to learn can also be interpreted as a right to learner-centered, demand-driven education, as it is expressed in the expanded vision of “Education for All.” Soweto schoolgirls and boys actively claimed this right when they boycotted the apartheid policy, which forced on them the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. In the history of literacy education, rejection of literacy education is a means of resistance, for example, to language and educational policy imposed by the government. Such *analphabétisme de résistance* is described and defined by Wagner and Grenier (1990) in the case of Canada. *Analphabétisme de résistance* is a reaction to domination, which can be observed in many contexts in which a political minority rejects assimilation.

5. CHANGING INTERPRETATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The definitions of social justice for education influence decisions in the education sector about which beneficiaries and resources should be given priority. Such definitions and guidelines for implementation change continuously as they are negotiated in international and national debates. We highlight

some of these in this section. For example, between the 1940s and the 1980s the scope of education changed considerably: it shifted from “elementary” education for children and “fundamental” education for adults to the concept of “basic education” for children *and* adults. The demand for “basic education for all human beings” was made for the first time in 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All. The provision of access to education and learning is a political act and a road to social justice; it has been the centerpiece of all major world conferences on adult education from the First International Conference on Adult Education in Elsinore, Denmark, in 1949 to the latest in 1997 in Hamburg, CONFINTEA V.

5.1 1945–1990: What should be the minimum?

In its quest for social justice UNESCO—from its early years until the World Conference on Education for All—sought to answer the question, “What should be the minimum educational provision to all as it was determined for the minimum wage, the minimum social, or health services, etc.?” The answer was formed by sharpening the definition of the right to education. Thus, the focus of international efforts was on the implementation of education for children due to the pressure that the demand for free *and* compulsory elementary education exerts. Adult “fundamental” education was treated only to a limited extent and understood as remedial education for illiterate adults who had not received full elementary education.

The first Director-General of UNESCO, Julian Huxley, emphasized this notion of fundamental adult education. He considered it a “lack of basic justice” and a “denial of elementary freedom” that half of the people of the world cannot read and write (UNESCO, 2000a: 27). This is how the “eradication of illiteracy” became a priority issue for UNESCO in its fight against injustice. It should be noted here that the role of literacy for social development should be neither over- nor underestimated (see Street, 2001). Huxley’s agenda is still relevant today: the current Director-General, Koïchiro Matsuura, emphasized in his message on the occasion of the celebration of the International Literacy Day on September 8, 2003 that the UN Literacy Decade 2003–2012 has the task and challenge of giving “the excluded a chance to participate”⁷.

5.2 1990: Jomtien: a vision of more than the minimum

One of the major achievements of the World Conference on Education for All (1990) in Jomtien was a common definition of what it means to meet

⁷http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID-14457&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.03-Jun-04, accessed on January 27, 2005.

the basic learning needs for all, the formulation of key goals for an expanded vision “that is not restricted to a certain period (childhood), a specific institution (school) or a single type of knowledge (official school curriculum)” (Torres, 2000: 17).

The declaration “Education for All” and the attendant framework for action reaffirm the right to education and provide the education sector with a vision. Article 1.1 of the declaration defines the target group of basic learning needs as “every person—child, youth, adult.” The expanded vision incorporates several aspects pertaining to social justice, such as universalizing access and promoting equity (Art. 3); a learner-centered approach that is focused on learning (Art. 4, 6); and broadening the means and scope of basic education (Art. 5). This broad vision of basic education was the result of tenacious negotiations between the four main sponsors of the conference (the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, and UNESCO), whereby UNESCO held the most comprehensive view of education, one that linked school and out-of-school education, that is, emphasized the importance of both formal and nonformal education (Müller, 2001).

Despite the successful integration of UNESCO’s view into the declaration, stocktaking at the conference in Amman, 1996 showed that in practice the vision was reduced to access to primary schooling. Torres (2000, 2001) points to the fact that the *Education for All* proposal could be interpreted narrowly or broadly. Taking stock in 2000, it became clear that the narrow interpretation was favored and that there had been no transformation of the education sector in keeping with the expanded vision (Torres, 2000).

5.3 1997: CONFINTEA V: a paradigm shift from provision to demand

Social justice is a key element of the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning*, which was adopted at the end of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V). Paragraph 10 emphasizes that “the ultimate goal should be the creation of a learning society committed to social justice and general well-being” (UIE, 1997). This conference broadened the scope of debate from basic education to lifelong learning. Tight (1998) demonstrates with a comparison of two surveys conducted in Great Britain how a shift in perspective on the scope of education can affect the perception of participation patterns. One survey defined learning and participation as a formal and accredited kind of education, whereas the other survey included self-directed and untaught learning activities. The first found that 40% of adults have participated in learning during the last 3 years, while the second study found that 74% of adults did. Tight concludes that “the key issue then becomes not whether we are

participating or not at any given time, but rather how much we are participating, and in what sort(s) of learning” (p. 115).

The CONFINTEA V Follow-up Report to the General Conference of UNESCO (UIE, 1999) highlights that this conference defined a new vision of adult learning by placing the learner at the center. It has two core aspects regarding access to education as social justice. First, the new vision is clearly based on inclusion as incorporating diversity: “the goal of equality of learning opportunities cannot be reached without offering all people the opportunity to better identify with their own roots” (UIE, 1999: 5). Omolewa’s (2002) call for the integration of African educational practices illustrates this point. Second, the vision emphasizes a shift away from a provision orientation to a demand-based and participatory approach to adult learning. The term “lifelong *learning*” instead of “lifelong *education*” expresses this notion. Therefore, new policies are needed which support “the creation of spaces for people to express their learning aspirations and the promotion of stimulating and participatory environments” (UIE, 1999: 6). This marked a genuine paradigm shift for quality in adult education.

Torres (2002) highlights the link between demand-driven education and access to education. She points out that, from today’s perspective, access to education can be discussed with a simplistic notion or a complex one. The simplistic notion answers the question “Access to what?” by referring to access to formal schooling and to devices such as computers, as well as access to knowledge and learning. This kind of access is supply-driven.

The complex, demand-driven notion of access goes beyond the first one. The question “Access to what?” has to be answered with reference to quality. The reason for this is that access to education makes sense only if the system to which access is given is of relevance to the learners. Another central feature is that access has to lead learners to something that is useful to them and satisfies them, as well as improves their living conditions (Torres, 2002). The complex notion therefore requires that educators work together with their target group in order to generate demand-driven learning. This can best be achieved through integration of learners into the system not only as recipients of the educational program but also as active participants in its conceptualization and implementation. It should be noted that “each situation has its own realistic degree of participation that can be achieved” (Shaeffer, 1994: 18).

There is a difference between “the South and the North” regarding the scope and target groups of adult education. Torres (2002: 3) notes that, in the affluent North, lifelong learning is a “key political, societal and organizing principle for the 21st century. At the same time, basic education—narrowly understood—is being applied as the equivalent organizing principle for the South.” Ideological *and* socioeconomic reasons are responsible for the fact that nonformal education in the South tends to be regarded as

remedial assistance for the poor, and nonformal education in the North as a flourishing sector for those who do not belong to a social or economic fringe group (Sutcliffe and Jacobsen, 1998).

5.4 2000: The Dakar Framework for Action: back to basic education

The result of the World Education Forum Conference in Dakar in 2000 was the formulation of six international goals. These are meant to reaffirm the commitment of the international community to achieve the goals set in Jomtien, goals that were still largely unmet. The pragmatic and minimalist goals of the *Dakar Framework for Action* are set with benchmarks. They aim at widening access and fostering participation in all forms of *basic* education (formal, nonformal, informal) for all children, youth, and adults, so that social justice can be assured at a basic level. Two goals (2 and 6) were singled out to testify to the international community's concern for quality and to reinforce gender equity and equality.

Some education experts are already voicing their fears that the six goals will be further reduced in the course of their implementation. Torres (2001, 2002: 7) observes that, within the Dakar framework, "Education for All" might prove to have a very limited reach: "Education" in many countries might stand only for formal education, specifically primary education, which is supply-driven. The general improvement of the social learning environment, as well as the role of nonformal and informal learning, is excluded. On the other hand, "for All" might be seen as meaning mainly children, specifically primary schoolgirls; and "all countries with joint responsibility" might be reduced to "developing countries with self-responsibility" (p. 7).

When applied to reality, the six Dakar goals face severe challenges with regard to both dimensions of social justice, redistribution of resources and recognition of social status. These challenges concern social and economic injustice, such as poverty, violence, and inequality in access to information technology (see UIE, 2003). *Poverty* of marginalized people and newly poor groups is a major problem in many regions of the world and is both a source and a result of inequality. Despite knowledge of the benefits of education for the whole social and environmental system, the inclusion of marginalized people (not only minorities but also majorities) is not being advanced as a principal area of concern. Social justice in education is also threatened by *violence*, which has many causes, including poverty and despair, discriminatory social structures, greed, and demand for power. Wars and armed conflicts continually arise from social and economic differences; they can go on for years and render education for all impossible. The use of *new information and communication technologies*, once seen as

a possibility to widen access to education and information globally, has turned out to be impracticable especially for those in the South and in remote areas who are already neglected by educational systems. The metaphor of a “digital divide” describes the actual situation better than the hope for a shared “digital dividend,” even though innovative participatory projects are mushrooming in poor and remote areas.

6. CONTINUOUS NEGOTIATIONS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

We defined the concept of social justice on the basis of Fraser’s two-dimensional notion (2000), which defines social justice as egalitarian redistribution of resources and recognition of diversity and nondiscrimination. Parity in participation and equality are considered core principles of this notion. The two dimensions are amplified by the notion of participatory justice, according to which individuals need to be enabled by society to participate in its developments. Applied to education, such a definition of social justice incorporates the right of all human beings to participate in quality education on a nondiscriminatory basis. Striving for social justice in any social sector means facing the challenge of pursuing ideological and social change contrary to prevailing sociopolitical and economic conditions, as well as the resistance of those in power (see Rikowski, 2000).

UNESCO’s contribution to social justice in education was discussed by highlighting some central standard-setting instruments that have been established since UNESCO’s foundation, particularly how they shape international debates and decisions in the education sector. UNESCO’s constitution (Art. 1) gives top priority to furthering universal respect for justice. Social justice is therefore a central issue in all its activities and standard-setting instruments, such as conventions, declarations, recommendations, and frameworks for action. These instruments are developed together with its member states for use in the formulation and the implementation of educational policies. Thus, each is a more-or-less legally binding political statement.

As the historical perspective on changes in international standards for educational policies has shown, the consensus on what such standards should be has not developed in a linear fashion. Negotiations over standards are shaped by numerous factors, including prevailing ideologies, willingness for reform, available resources for education, and sociopolitical conflicts. Changes in the extent to which social justice is envisaged in educational policies depend on how narrowly or broadly the vision of social justice is defined.

Due to its mandate and its scope of action as a coordinator of its member states, UNESCO’s task has all along been to keep social justice on the

international agenda. In seeking to fulfill its mandate, however, UNESCO faces numerous challenges. For example, its mandate has been “at once broad, idealistic and vague” (Mundy, 1999: 31) and it has an unstable financial basis, partly due to “deteriorating commitment of northern countries to redistributive multilateralism” (p. 47), despite the fact that international “equalization” was established as a common goal at UNESCO’s founding conference in 1945 (see also Jones, 1999).

Prominent examples of UNESCO’s standard-setting instruments for inclusive and participatory education policies are the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* (1960), the *World Declaration on Education for All* (1990), the *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education* (1989), the *World Declaration on Higher Education* (1998), and *The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* (1997). Those instruments systematically integrate the right to education as expressed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1950: Art. 26), as well as in the *Convention against Discrimination in Education*. UNESCO has also provided the international community with two trendsetting studies (Faure et al., 1972; Delors et al., 1996), which introduced the concept of four pillars of learning—“learning to be,” “learning to do,” “learning to know,” and “learning to live together”—and thereby contributed to the debate on participatory justice in education. Nevertheless, “the prospect of widening inequalities in education, in part due to market-oriented schooling [education], and ‘substantial tolerance on inequalities and exclusion’ (OECD, 2001: 126) are more than real” (Zajda, 2002: 86).

We discussed social justice as access to and participation in quality learning, as well as participation in the creation of the learning society. Quality learning is addressed in most of the standard-setting instruments. Unfortunately, in practice the implementation of recommendations on this issue has usually been regarded as a step subsequent to the implementation of quantitative goals. Such an approach has usually been socially and financially costly because many resources have been expended with little return, since learners either refuse to participate (e.g., *analphabétisme de résistance*) or gain little from participation (see also Omolewa and Kellaghan, 2003).

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Chapter 11

UNIVERSALIZING ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION: UNESCO'S NORMATIVE ACTION

Kishore Singh

1. INTRODUCTION

The right to education is increasingly recognized as an overarching right—one not only fundamental in itself but also indispensable for the realization of all other human rights. It is essential to the process of socioeconomic development, and its role in empowering individuals and transforming societies, underscored in 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, has enhanced its significance. UNESCO has placed the outcome of the Dakar World Education Forum at the heart of its activities and Education for All (EFA) high on its agenda. Realization of the right to basic education for all has become a priority area of action. Already the vision for education developed by UNESCO in 1990s provided conceptual orientation regarding basic education for all. In its report presented to UNESCO, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century stated that

Basic education is the first step in attempting to attenuate the enormous disparities affecting many groups—women, rural populations, the urban poor, marginalized ethnic minorities and the millions of children not attending school and working. (Delors et al., 1996: 118)

The commission stressed that the concept of lifelong learning goes beyond the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education. It links up with another concept, that of the learning society, in which everything affords an opportunity to learn and realize one's potential. Everyone can thus adapt to a changing world so that each person remains involved in society and can contribute to its development.

However, realizing the right to basic education for all is one of the greatest moral challenges of our times, as millions of children, youths, and

adults remain deprived of it in today's knowledge society.¹ Moreover, one witnesses unprecedented disparities in access and quality as the demand for education grows and what is on offer becomes more diverse. Globalization "carries with it the danger of creating a market place in knowledge that excludes the poor and the disadvantaged" (UNESCO, 2000a: Para. 26). There is greater need today to uphold the fundamental principles of equality of educational opportunity and universal access to education without exclusion or discrimination. These principles lie at the heart of the EFA process. It has become crucial to place the concept of inclusive education as being central to educational systems and emphasize the need for wider access to education so that no one is deprived of it. Normative action to that end must be reinforced to strengthen the foundations of the right to education in national legal systems on the basis of international legal obligations. This is a major concern in UNESCO's collaboration with the United Nations system.

2. UNESCO'S STANDARD-SETTING INSTRUMENTS AND WIDER ACCESS TO EDUCATION

UNESCO's emphasis on basic education for all is a response to its constitutional mandate to seek to assure "full and equal opportunities for educational for all" (UNESCO, 1945).² A number of instruments elaborated by UNESCO in the fields of education give expression to this mandate and develop the right to education in its different dimensions (see Daudet and Singh, 2001).

2.1 Normative bases

The normative bases for wider access to education exist both in conventions, or hard law, and in recommendations and declarations, or soft law. Among UNESCO's normative instruments, the *Convention against Discrimination in Education* (1960) is central. It transforms the fundamental principles of nondiscrimination and equality of educational opportunity

¹The *Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment* (UNESCO/WEF 2000b) showed that more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are illiterate, and gender discrimination continues to pervade the education system.

²UNESCO's Constitution (1945) expresses the belief of its founders in "full and equal opportunities for education for all." UNESCO has the mandate to "give fresh impulse to popular education and to the spread of culture: . . . by collaborating with Member States, at their request, in the development of educational activities."

into international norms. Each of the 91 State Parties to this convention undertakes to formulate, develop, and apply a national policy that, using methods appropriate to the state's circumstances and national usage, will promote equality of both opportunity and treatment in education.³ The convention obliges State Parties to "assure compliance by all with the obligation to attend school prescribed by law" (Art. 4, Sec. a). It enjoins State Parties to "encourage and intensify by appropriate methods the education of persons who have not received any primary education or who have not completed the entire primary education course and the continuation of their education on the basis of individual capacity" (Art. 4, Sec. c). Thus the convention obliges each signatory state to expand educational opportunities for all those who remain deprived of primary education.

Similar provisions are contained in Article 13 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (United Nations, 1976). This article treats the right to education comprehensively. The State Parties to the covenant recognize the right of everyone to education (Art. 13, Sec. 1) and seek to realize this right fully: "Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education" (Sec. 2d).

The *Convention against Discrimination in Education* is a main pillar of the EFA process, which is UNESCO's high priority area. Its abiding significance is indicated by the fact that it has often been mentioned in other instruments adopted by UNESCO and by the United Nations relating to the right to education. For example, resolutions adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) systematically refer to the convention and to the principles it reflects. Thus, the Resolutions 2003/23 and 2004/25 on the right to education mention all the grounds of discrimination prohibited by the convention and urge all states "to take all appropriate measures to eliminate obstacles limiting effective access to education" by "taking all necessary legislative measures to prohibit explicitly discrimination in education on the basis of race, colour, descent, national, ethnic or social origin, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, property, disability, birth or other status which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education" (UNCHR, 2004: 6b). These provisions are largely a restatement of those of the convention.

While respecting the diversity of national educational systems, the convention protects the educational rights of national minorities. The State Parties to the convention agree:

³The convention states that discrimination "includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education" (UNESCO, 1960: Art. 1).

It is essential to recognize the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their own language, provided however, (a) that this right is not exercised in a manner which prevents the members of these minorities from understanding the culture and language of the community as a whole and from participating in its activities, or which prejudices national sovereignty; (b) that the standard of education is not lower than the general standard laid down or approved by the competent authorities. (Art. 5, Sec. 1c)

The State Parties to this convention have sought to take all necessary steps to ensure the application of these principles.

It cannot be stressed enough how important national level action is for the provision of equal educational opportunities for all. Measures taken by member states to implement the convention contribute to this process and thus promote normative action. Monitoring the implementation of the convention has also aimed at creating wider access to education. UNESCO has so far conducted six consultations with member states on the implementation of the convention, and the seventh consultation is in process. The sixth consultation focused on the basic education of four population groups: women and girls, persons belonging to minorities, refugees, and indigenous peoples (UNESCO, 1999). It revealed that the variety of educational laws and legislative texts adopted by member states to prohibit discrimination in education is rooted in the historical, cultural, economic, and political conditions specific to each member state. The normative action that follows up on the convention contributes to making education the constitutional right of all children and adults irrespective of gender, ethnic, social, cultural, religious or linguistic affiliation, or any other difference.

The state obligation for creating wider access to education is also reflected in the *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education* (UNESCO, 1989). It says that the contracting states “shall work towards the right to *equal access* to technical and vocational education and towards *equality of opportunity* to study throughout the educational process” (Art. 2; emphasis added). They are to guarantee that there is no discrimination against individuals who have attained the educational level required for admission into technical and vocational education. Further, the convention contains provisions regarding special needs education. It calls for contracting states to “pay attention to the special needs of the handicapped and other disadvantaged groups and take appropriate measures to enable these groups to benefit from technical and vocational education” (Art. 2, Para. 4).

Other instruments elaborated by UNESCO, namely recommendations and declarations that do not have the force of law, deal with specific matters

and also provide normative bases for creating wider access to education. They have moral force and can be characterized as “soft laws.” The *Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education* (UNESCO, 2001c) provides that technical and vocational education should be so designed that it

is available to people with disabilities and to socially and economically disadvantaged groups such as immigrants, refugees, minorities (including indigenous peoples), demobilized soldiers in post-conflict situations, and underprivileged and marginalized youth in special forms adapted to their needs in order to integrate them more easily into society. (Art. 7, Sec. g)

It is recommended that, when developing and improving technical and vocational education, member states should take whatever legislative or other steps may be required to give force within their respective territories to the principles set forth in this recommendation.

The *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education* (UNESCO, 1976) and the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* (UNESCO, 1997) give primacy to norms and standards for promoting wider access and inclusive approaches to education. They are aimed at providing continuing education and learning opportunities for youths and adults. They also promote inclusive approaches to education. The *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education* stipulates that the education of young people should “progressively be oriented towards lifelong education” and learning, taking into account the experience gained in regard to adult education, with a view to preparing young people, whatever their social origins, to take part in adult education (UNESCO, 1976). To this end, it calls for measures to be taken with a view to “making access to all levels of education and training more widely available.” The recommendation enjoins states to

take measures with a view to promoting participation in adult education and community development programmes by members of the most under-privileged groups, whether rural or urban, settled or nomadic, and in particular illiterates, young people who have been unable to acquire an adequate standard of general education or a qualification, migrant workers and refugees, unemployed workers, members of ethnic minorities, persons suffering from a physical or mental handicap, persons experiencing difficulties of social adjustment and those serving prison sentences. In this context, member states should associate themselves in the search for educational strategies designed to foster more equitable relations among social groups.

Furthermore, the recommendation stipulates that

The place of adult education in each education system should be defined with a view to achieving a rectification of the main inequalities in access to initial education and training, in particular inequalities based on age, sex, social position or social or geographical origin. . . . Consideration should be given to the need for an adult education component, including literacy, in the framing and execution of any development programme.

As regards the follow-up action, the recommendation provides that

Each Member State should recognize adult education as a necessary and specific component of its education system and as a permanent element in its social, cultural and economic development policy; it should, consequently, promote the creation of structures, the preparation and implementation of programmes and the application of educational methods which meet the needs and aspirations of all categories of adults, without restriction on grounds of sex, race, geographical origin, age, social status, opinion, belief or prior educational standard.⁴

Far-reaching changes that had occurred since the adoption of the recommendation warranted the inclusion of the new concepts highlighted by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Steps in that direction were taken in 1997 when the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* was adopted. Regarding adult education as a “key to the twenty-first century,” the declaration postulates that the “State remains the essential vehicle for ensuring the right to education for all, particularly for the most vulnerable groups of society, such as minorities and indigenous peoples, and for providing an overall policy framework” (UIE, 1997). It develops a new conception of education that extends “throughout life.” The ultimate stated goal is “the creation of a learning society committed to social justice and general well-being.” The declaration contains the main principles and concepts adopted so far in the context of the right to education and makes them generally applicable to the population as a whole. As regards the implementation measures, the *Agenda for the Future* (UIE, 1997) expresses member states’ commitment to develop adult learning, as well as a series of commitments on important themes such as “ensuring universal right to literacy and basic education.” The follow-up strategy in the declaration stipulates that the learning needs of all young people and adults must be met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.

⁴The recommendation calls upon Member States to support the action undertaken by UNESCO in its efforts to develop adult education, particularly in the fields of training, research, and evaluation.

Eliminating exclusion within the field of education is the main objective of the *Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policies and Practice in Special Needs on Education* (UNESCO, 1994). It calls upon all governments to adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education. According to the statement, "Legislation should recognize the principle of equality of opportunity for children, youth and adults with disabilities in primary, secondary and tertiary education carried out, in so far as possible, in integrated settings." The statement places emphasis on the development of strategies that seek to bring about a genuine equalization of opportunity in education. In recognizing the need to work towards *schools for all*, it marks an important contribution to efforts to achieve education for all.

Access to education for vulnerable groups is one of the concerns of the *Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy* (UNESCO, 1995). This declaration maintains that,

in order to create understanding between different groups of society, there must be respect for the educational rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as well as indigenous people, and this must also have implications in curricula and methods as well as in the way education is organized.

The country reports submitted to UNESCO 2000 on the status of implementation of the *Declaration and Integrated Framework* also relate to the measures taken as a follow up to these provisions (UNESCO, 2000b).

As UNESCO's normative instruments show, equal opportunity, equitable and wider access to education are often interlinked. This is illustrated by the *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century* (UNESCO, 1998). This Declaration expresses the conviction that "education is a fundamental pillar of human rights, democracy, sustainable development and peace, and shall therefore become accessible to all throughout life." Article 3 of the Declaration is entitled "Equity of Access," and Article 4, Section d, states:

Access to higher education for members of some special target groups, such as indigenous peoples, cultural and linguistic minorities, disadvantaged groups, peoples living under occupation and those who suffer from disabilities, must be actively facilitated, since these groups as collectivities and as individuals may have both experience and talent that can be of great value for the development of societies and nations.

UNESCO is executing a number of activities as a follow-up to this declaration.

Normative action undertaken by UNESCO for universalizing access to education thus has a broad basis. It was reoriented towards EFA at the

World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien. The major thrust was to make basic education accessible to all as a right and to ensure that, before the end of the twentieth century, every child was put in school. Recalling that “education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men of all ages, throughout our world,” the *World Declaration on Education for All* (UNESCO, 1990) adopted at the conference states that “Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults. To this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded and consistent measures must be taken to reduce disparity” (Art. 3). Furthermore, the declaration provides that “Every person—child, youth and adult—shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.”

However, despite decade-long efforts, providing educational opportunities for all on an equitable basis and eliminating disparities in education remained a persistent challenge at the turn of the century and the dawn of the new millennium. Governments, organizations, agencies, groups, and associations therefore made a collective commitment at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 to

ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes; . . . achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

The *Dakar Framework for Action* (UNESCO/WEF, 2000a), adopted at the Forum, reaffirmed the vision “that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term” (Para. 2). Other declarations made as part of the EFA process, particularly those advanced by the nine high-population developing countries (E-9),⁵ have broadened normative action towards achieving wider access to education. Thus, in the *Delhi Declaration* (UNESCO, 1993) these countries committed themselves to “eliminate disparities of access to basic education arising from gender, age, income, family, cultural, ethnic and linguistic differences and geographic remoteness.” In Recife, Brazil, on the eve of the World Education Forum in 2000, the E-9 countries underscored the need for a new visionary agenda for the new millennium that will reaffirm “basic education as a human right” (UNESCO/WEF, 2000c). To that end, they called for “effecting changes in legislation to extend basic education and to include

⁵It is noteworthy that the E-9 countries, comprising Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan, account for more than 50% of the world’s population.

education for all in policy statements,” as well as for “ensuring access and equity for population located in inaccessible areas.” Recently in Beijing, in a Ministerial Review Meeting in 2001, the ministers and representatives of E-9 countries committed themselves to the strategies to “reinforce action-oriented programmes to meeting the learning needs of disadvantaged groups such as children with special needs, migrants, minorities and the rural/urban poor” (UNESCO, 2001a). It is thus clear that the significance of normative action for EFA has consistently been recognized.

The questions related to universalizing access to education are also addressed in the regional level instruments in Africa. *A Framework for Action in Sub-Saharan Africa: Education for African Renaissance in the Twenty-first Century* (UNESCO/WEF, 1999) testifies to the importance of normative action. Within this framework, governments committed themselves “to removing all barriers (social, cultural, economic, political and legal) that hinder African children, youth and adults from having access to quality education and the attainment of the goals of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All.” They undertook to “review and develop educational and other policies and legislation within the framework of the African renaissance.” “Improving access and equity” is the key objective. The framework reaffirms that

education is a basic right and a basic need for all African children, youth and adults, including those with disabilities, as recognized in the international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the recommendations of the Salamanca Conference.

The framework contains strategic consideration for “increasing universal access to, and completion of, primary (basic) education” and provides that “special attention shall be devoted to the rights of disadvantaged groups, including girls and women, ethnic minorities, the disabled, those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and those in specially difficult circumstances in other ways.”⁶

⁶The importance of the right to education and its effective implementation is recognized in the regional level instruments in Africa. Article 17 of the *African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights* (ACHPR, 1981) provides that “every individual shall have the right to education.” The charter carries the obligation of incorporating in national legal systems the rights contained in it. The very first article of this charter calls for State Parties to the charter “to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect” to rights contained in it, which includes the right to education provided for in Article 17. What is commendable is that under the provisions of Article 62, all State Parties to the charter are required to report periodically on the way they give effect to the rights spelled out in the charter.

Thus, standard-setting instruments elaborated by UNESCO provide normative bases of universal access to education. They reflect fundamental principles, notably the principles of nondiscrimination, equality of educational opportunity and national treatment, and develop these into international norms. These instruments establish the international legal obligations for the right to education for all: for national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, for indigenous peoples, for the socially and economically marginalized, for vulnerable groups, for immigrants, for the disabled and handicapped, for refugees, for the rural–urban poor, and for millions of those deprived of education on account of poverty. Moreover, they provide normative bases for education in its diverse forms, such as adult education, community education, and special education. These instruments embody key concepts such as “inclusive approaches to education,” “continuing education,” and “lifelong learning.” What is most significant is that growing concern is expressed about ensuring the right to education, especially to basic education of socially and economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

2.2 Reinforcing normative action

The critical importance of normative action for EFA is reflected in UNESCO’s standard-setting instruments in the field of education. UNESCO’s normative action has been placed in a broader perspective: “towards education for all throughout life”⁷ at the beginning of a new millennium. Norms and standards elaborated by the organization provide a foundation on which to widen and universalize basic education. Pursuant to legal, political, and moral commitments to such norms and standards, it is incumbent upon governments to take policy measures and provide full educational opportunities for basic education for all. In this respect, inclusive approaches to education are of key importance. UNESCO’s *Medium-term Strategy (2002–2007)* (2002c) seeks to reinforce normative action along those lines. The strategy provides that

Particular emphasis will be placed on ensuring that education becomes truly inclusive, in particular by effectively reaching the unreached—especially the poor, women and girls, rural populations, minorities, refugees and countries or populations victims of disasters and people with special needs. (UNESCO, 2002c: Para. 62)

⁷The World Education Report 2001 is entitled *The Right to Education: Towards Education for All throughout Life* (WER, 2000). It deals with the right to education in its multiple dimensions and presents broad but concise analysis of major trends and policy issues in the field of the right to education.

UNESCO therefore supports member states' efforts to develop alternative delivery systems so that primary education reaches the poorest children and enables them to achieve on an equal footing with others. To ensure that the needs of the poor, the excluded, and the marginalized are addressed, UNESCO helps to build the necessary capacities in national governments and civil society, gather and disseminate best practices, and stimulate dialogue about inclusive approaches to educational strategies.

Having assumed greater responsibilities in the field of the right to education, UNESCO is engaged in a series of actions. With its mandate to take on a leading, normative role, the Organization is well placed to promote policy discussions around basic education;⁸ set standards for principles of action and indicators of assessment; engage in high-level advocacy; strengthen partnerships with other EFA actors. While pursuing the EFA goals, UNESCO continues to stimulate intellectual debate and to disseminate knowledge on key issues in education. This contributes to the elucidation and reinforcement of normative action for universalizing access to education. The Organization thus seeks to ensure access to education as a right and hence to enjoyment of a series of other rights, such as the right to development, which is hindered by the absence of an education in the modern sense.

Issues in universalizing access to education have been addressed as part of UNESCO's collaboration with professional bodies for promoting the right to education. Collaboration with the European Association for Education Law and Policy (ELA) regarding the right to education has been valuable in generating public debate on the right to education and reflections on key issues, such as equality of educational opportunities and universal access to education. As regards wider access to education, key issues such as the equality of opportunities in education and the right to education concerning notably vulnerable groups, such as immigrants, the handicapped, indigenous people, linguistic and ethnic minorities, and the millions deprived of education on account of extreme poverty, were dealt with at the International Colloquium organized by the INTERCENTER and UNESCO in 1999 entitled "The Right to Education of Vulnerable Groups whilst Respecting their Cultural Identity" (Singh, 2001; UNESCO/INTERCENTER, 2001).

Normative bases of accessibility to education as a right have been strengthened in the context of UNESCO's cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and especially with the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR). The *General Comment No. 13* on the right to education, elaborated by CESCR in collaboration with UNESCO, highlights the questions of accessibility to education. It elaborates briefly on physical accessibility—"education has

⁸UNESCO has been raising public debate on the right to education, for instance, through collaboration notably with the European Association for Education Law and Policy (ELA).

to be within safe physical reach, either by attendance at some reasonably convenient geographic location (e.g., a neighbourhood school) or via modern technology (e.g., access to a ‘distance learning’ programme)”—as well as on economic accessibility:

education has to be affordable to all. This dimension of accessibility is subject to the differential wording of article 13 (2) in relation to primary, secondary and higher education: whereas primary education shall be available ‘free to all’, States parties are required to progressively introduce free secondary and higher education. (CESCR, 1999)

In this connection, it is pertinent to refer to the role of governments, mentioned in UNESCO’s *Medium-term Strategy (2002–2007)*. The strategy provides that

Advancing the right to education as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is central to UNESCO’s mission. Free, compulsory and universal primary education for all is among the most clearly defined of these rights, which governments have duty and responsibility to make a reality. (UNESCO, 2002c)

Such responsibility underlies the objective set at the World Education Forum as well as Millennium Development Goals for universalizing primary education in all countries by 2015.

To universalize access to education it is indispensable to ensure effective implementation of the right to education for all. EFA needs to remain at the center of the implementing process. Action is being oriented in that direction as a result of a new approach that should characterize the monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO’s instruments in Member States. Pursuant to a decision taken by UNESCO’s Executive Board at its 165th session in November 2002, the implementation of UNESCO’s conventions and recommendations in the field of education should be related to EFA as UNESCO’s priority, “with particular emphasis being given to the right to education, a right integral to UNESCO’s institutional mission.” This decision also underlines the importance of creating greater awareness among Member States to respect their legal obligations under UNESCO’s Constitution and improving the monitoring mechanisms. Moreover, in the pursuit of EFA goals, governments’ responsibility for providing basic education for all has been stressed. This is an important consideration in the Joint Statement of April 26, 2002, made by the UNDP, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNICEF—on the second anniversary of the Dakar World Education Forum: “Governments have the responsibility of providing basic education for all. Access to education is a fundamental human right. Millions of people legitimately expect to have access to quality education” (UNESCO, 2002d).

3. UNESCO'S COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND NORMATIVE ACTION FOR WIDER ACCESS TO EDUCATION

UNESCO's collaborative efforts in the UN system for promoting wider access to basic education for all are reflected in a number of initiatives and programs.

3.1 Collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

The questions concerning access to basic education for all are covered by UNESCO's cooperation with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and especially with the CESCR. Both UNESCO and CESCR monitor the implementation of the right to education in member states, focusing on complementarity in promoting that right. As a treaty body, CESCR monitors the implementation of the right to education in line with the state obligations outlined in Articles 13 and 14 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (United Nations, 1976). The *General Comment No. 13* on the right to education elaborated by CESCR in collaboration with UNESCO, which elucidates this right, places emphasis on accessibility and provides that "educational institutions and programmes have to be accessible to everyone, without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of the State party" (CESCR, 1999). It also says that "education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable groups, in law and fact, without discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds." As a result of UNESCO's active involvement with CESCR, prominence is given to the right to basic education for all. There is a need to strengthen normative action by incorporating state obligations into national legal systems, as was emphasized in a meeting organized by CESCR in cooperation with UNESCO in May 2002 on the right to education and follow-up to the World Education Forum (CESCR, 2003). Furthermore, in its first meeting, organized at UNESCO Headquarters, in May 2003, the Joint Expert Group UNESCO (CR)/ECOSOC (CESCR) on the Monitoring of the Right to Education (UNESCO, 2002e) made concrete recommendations and suggestions regarding the right to education, with priority given to EFA. It stressed the need for research and studies on the foundations of the right to education in national legal

systems, in view of the international obligations for the realization of that right.

3.2 Wider access to education as a follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban in 2001 enhanced the significance of normative action for ensuring wider access to education. The *Durban Declaration and Programme of Action* (UNESCO, 2001b) amply demonstrates the need for revitalizing action for nondiscrimination and equality of opportunity in the field of education. In the section entitled “Access to Education without Discrimination” (Para. 121–124), states are urged “to ensure equal access to education for all in law and in practice” (Para. 122) and “to adopt and implement laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin at all levels of education, both formal and non-formal” (Para. 123). Furthermore, they are urged “to establish and implement standardized methods to measure and track the educational performance of disadvantaged children and young people.”

Access to education is an important element of the *Durban Declaration and Programme of Action*. Especially noteworthy in the *Programme of Action* is the emphasis on providing access to primary education for all children, girls and boys, free of cost, to lifelong learning and education for all adults and for persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities without discrimination of any kind. The *Programme of Action* thus recognizes the importance of normative action and the need for fundamental changes in the distribution of educational resources, along with positive measures in favor of disadvantaged groups, including those who have been and continue to be victims of racial discrimination and consequently deprived of education. It underlines the need to

adopt, where applicable, appropriate measures to ensure that persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities have access to education without discrimination of any kind and, where possible, have an opportunity to learn their own language in order to protect them from any form of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance that they may be subjected to. (UNESCO, 2001b: Para. 124)

UNESCO, which participated actively in the World Conference, has since adopted an integrated strategy to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance (UNESCO, 2003).

3.3 United Nations Literacy Decade: UNESCO's role

In the foregoing we have already highlighted UNESCO's normative action concerning the promotion of adult education and continuing learning. This is receiving increasing attention today. Combating illiteracy is an important dimension of universalizing access to basic education. Providing opportunities for education and learning to youths and adults deprived of education is indeed a big challenge. There are an estimated 862 million illiterate adults in the world today, 63.7% of whom are women. There are approximately 140 million illiterate young people (aged 15–24), of whom 86 million are female. Over 104 million children are still being denied access to education. These figures indicate the scope of the challenges of widening access to education. They call for promoting literacy and improving adult learning situations, as well as formal and nonformal adult education and training in developing countries. The magnitude of these challenges in Africa is even greater since there has been an increase in absolute illiteracy.

According to estimates, the illiteracy rate went down from 49.2% to 38.7% between 1990 and 2000: for men, from 38.1% to 29.3%, and women from 60.1% to 48%. But during the same period, the number of absolute illiteracy continued to increase, moving from 173 million to 183 million, with the proportion of women remaining the same at about 60%. The objective to be attained would be an illiteracy rate of 19.3% in 2015. (Africa/NEPAD, 2002)

UNESCO recognizes the need to accelerate the pace at all levels and to promote effective partnership, focusing on the struggle for literacy at the national level. Measures that must be taken to achieve literacy and eradicate poverty, as well as to universalize primary education, are closely interrelated. Expanding nonformal basic education and promoting “legal discourse” on literacy as part of the basic EFA process is an important consideration in promoting normative action.

Launched in 2003, the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012) is part of the global effort to achieve the goals of EFA. The aim of the Literacy Decade is to increase access to literacy for those unable to read and to write. The Literacy Decade is intended to serve as a stimulus to literacy action and an opportunity to raise awareness about the literacy challenge around the world while promoting action aimed at achieving literacy within the framework of EFA. UNESCO has the coordinating role for the monitoring and evaluation of the Literacy Decade and for the implementation of the *International Plan of Action* (United Nations, 2002). An important task consists in contributing to advocacy for literacy. Action is being guided by the concept that the measurement of literacy should go beyond the traditional

dichotomy of illiterate/literate to take into account various functional uses of literacy in social, cultural, economic, and citizenship terms. In addition to the Literacy Decade, a potential EFA flagship program is the Education for Rural People initiative led jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO/IIEP). These two bodies conducted a global study entitled *Education for Rural Development: Towards New Policy Responses* (FAO/UNESCO, 2004), which aims to build awareness about the importance of education for rural people for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The study shows that it is of prime importance of providing access to quality basic education to rural people by implementing basic education plans; doing so not only addresses their learning needs but also increases national capacity. UNESCO has also been involved in developing “Information Literate Societies,” an endeavor linked to the Literacy Decade goal of creating literate societies.

4. UNIVERSALIZING ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION: NATIONAL-LEVEL LEGAL MEASURES

Obligations assumed by states under various international and regional instruments relating to the right to education commit their governments to put in place necessary legal and policy measures. The need for promoting normative action with a view to universalizing access to basic education is recognized in UNESCO’s *Medium-term Strategy (2002–2007)*. There it is said: “A major task for UNESCO will be to support member states in policy reforms, especially the design and implementation of EFA policies and action plans as well as of *legal instruments for promoting universal access to basic education*” (UNESCO, 2002c). It is indeed essential that political and legal commitments made at the World Education Forum, as well as those established in the instruments of UNESCO and the United Nations, be incorporated into the domestic legal order.

4.1 Education for All and national legal systems

Under the *Dakar Framework for Action*, governments are committed to strengthening national and regional mechanisms to ensure that EFA is on the agenda, for example, of every national legislature (UNESCO, 2000a: Para. 13). This received priority consideration at the second meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (Abuja, Nigeria, November 2002).

In the first recommendation of the communiqué issued at this meeting, the Ministers of Education state:

As next steps we particularly recommend that: Governments in the South must ensure that free and compulsory primary education is a right reflected in national legislation and in practice. National strategies to achieve the goals of Education for All must receive its necessary share of government budgets and benefit from all possible funding sources, including debt relief. (UNESCO, 2002b: Para. 10)

For promoting normative action, reflections on certain questions of critical importance are essential: How do governments fulfill their *minimum core obligations* with respect to the right to education? How are state obligations incorporated into constitutional provisions and translated into educational laws? How are these laws being reformulated bearing in mind EFA? How do governments fulfill their political responsibility in universalizing primary/basic education and in making it accessible to all as a right? The need for national measures aimed at promoting normative action was underlined at the Round Table on Constitutional/Legal Bases of the Right to Education as a Fundamental Human Right, organized by UNESCO during the Eighth Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII) in December 2002. The participants suggested that a comparative analysis of constitutions and education laws in Africa should be undertaken (UNESCO, 2002f).

As mentioned above, people can avail themselves of the right to education as provided for in existing instruments when their government's obligations, as specified in these instruments, are incorporated into the respective national legal system and their implementation is ensured. State obligations under existing instruments should be further linked with national education policies and development processes. Bearing in mind the key importance of constitutional and legislative foundations of the right to education, UNESCO has initiated activities with the aim of providing technical assistance to member states. Such assistance is being provided for the development of national legislation. UNESCO also makes available its expertise so as to give prominence to state obligations and government commitments for the realization of the right to education, especially under UNESCO's instruments and the *Dakar Framework for Action* so that these receive adequate consideration.

Recent developments in national legislation regarding education in some countries relate to the concept of basic education. The *Act on National Education System* enacted by the Republic of Indonesia in July 2003 provides for compulsory basic education, which encompasses primary and junior secondary level education, that is, basic education for

every child of primary and junior secondary age. Article 4(3) of the act provides that “Education is conducted as a life-long cultural and empowerment of learners.” Furthermore, Article 5(3) provides that “citizens in the remote or less-developed areas, and isolated areas have the rights to receive service of special education,” and Article 5(5) provides that “every citizen shall have the right to enhance his/her educational ability in the process of life-long education” (Indonesia, 2003).⁹ Similarly, the Republic of Nigeria’s 2003 *An Act on Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education* provides for basic education. It defines basic education as early childhood care and education and nine years of formal schooling; and the Act defines universal basic education as early childhood care and education, the nine years of formal schooling and literacy and non-formal education, skills acquisition programs, and the education of special groups (such as nomads and migrants, girls and women, *almajiri*, street children, and the disabled).

4.2 Constitutional provisions for the right to basic education

The right to education forms an integral part of UNESCO’s Constitution. It is also enshrined in the constitutions of many countries. Constitutions in almost all African countries carry provisions on the right to education, and in some countries the right to basic education is also a constitutional right. The constitutions of some countries refer to international and regional instruments and state obligations. What is more, in many countries, their constitutions express their commitment to establishing universal primary education. The fundamental principles of equal access to education and of equality of opportunity are enshrined in the constitutions of several African countries—the principles that both UNESCO’s *Convention against Discrimination in Education* and the *Dakar Framework for Action* put forth. In some other countries, constitutions contain provisions for the eradication of illiteracy.

With respect to constitutional development, Kenya provides a good example. The right to education has been duly recognized in the process of

⁹Provisions for nonformal education are contained in Part V of the *Act on National Education System* in Article 26: Nonformal education is aimed at developing learners’ potentials with emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and functional skills and developing personality and professional attitudes; nonformal education comprises life-skills education, early childhood education, youth education, women empowerment education, literacy education, vocational training and workshop, equality education, and other kinds of education aimed at developing learners’ abilities; training centers and colleges are provided for community members in need of the acquisition of knowledge, competencies, life-skills, and attitudes to develop their personality, professionalism, working ethic, entrepreneurship, and/or for further education.

the constitutional reform in Kenya. The Draft Constitution of Kenya (2002: Art. 51) contains provisions on education and provides that:

- (1) Every person has the right to a basic education, including preprimary, primary and secondary education.
- (2) The government shall institute a program to implement the right of every child to free and compulsory primary education.
- (3) The state, through reasonable measures, shall make progressively available and accessible postsecondary education.
- (4) Every person has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that meet standards laid down in legislation; and comply with the requirements of the Constitution.

The right to education is also provided for in the new constitution recently adopted in Rwanda.

The provisions regarding the equal and adequate educational opportunities in the constitutions of the United Republic of Tanzania and in the Republic of Nigeria deserve special mention. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that “Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels” (Art. 18, Sec. 1). Similarly, the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania provides that “The government shall endeavour to ensure that there are equal and adequate opportunities” (Art. 11, Sec. 5).¹⁰

Several questions arise about the import of adequate opportunity. What is the correlation of adequate opportunity with the minimum educational facilities in terms of infrastructure and with the provision of educational services? Are educational facilities in remote rural areas and urban slums adequate? Is providing educational and learning material part of adequate opportunity? Do schools have the obligation to provide textbooks and educational material to learners, especially for the poor? What is the relationship of adequate opportunity to school environment, that is, is such an environment attractive enough so as to retain pupils? Are school meals provided? Does adequate opportunity involve considerations of physical access to education, especially where the children have to travel long distances to attend schools? More importantly, can the opportunities be considered adequate in want of qualified, trained teachers?

Such questions can be examined in the context of evolving policy responses to basic education for all. Indonesia’s EFA Country Report,

¹⁰Constitutions in some other African countries contain similar provisions. Thus, the Constitution of Liberia states that “The Republic shall . . . provide equal access to educational opportunities and facilities for all citizens . . .” (Article 6). The Constitution of Uganda provides, “The State shall take appropriate measures to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest educational standard possible.” (Art. XVIII [ii]).

Education for All: The Year 2000 Assessment (Indonesian Ministry of National Education, 2000), states that Indonesia is aiming at the expansion of equity. To support the expansion of equal opportunity for basic education for all, the government has provided various activities—such as construction of buildings, expansion and rehabilitation of buildings, support for school in the poor and remote areas, increased access to literacy programs, and providing nonconventional patterns of schooling, publication and guidance for nine-year basic education.

The Republic of Nigeria's *Bill on Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education* (2003) contains provisions in Article 3 that "The services provided in public primary and junior secondary schools shall be free of charge." The services that should be provided free of charge under the proposed act are books, instructional materials, classrooms, furniture, and free lunch.

India's *Free and Compulsory Education for Children Bill* from 2003 (GOI, 2003) states that free education means

exemption from obligation to pay tuition fee or other charges which schools usually collect from pupils in a school. It may extend to provisions of free supply of text-books, note-books, other study materials, health care and nutrition where the appropriate Government so declares by rules made under the Act.

In Kenya, educational objectives expressed in the *Report of the Sector Review and Development* (2003; document communicated to UNESCO, Paris) concern both the provision of expanded opportunities for children, youths, and adults so as to enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be competitive in the global job market, and the establishment of a comprehensive adult and continuing education program for lifelong learning. Their importance for basic education hardly needs to be emphasized. Recent measures taken by the Government of Kenya for universalizing access to primary education include abolishing all fees and levies for primary education, providing textbooks and learning material to the poor and needy, making available to children from poor families bursaries and uniforms, school food programs, and boarding school for the children from remote areas. Under the Text Book Fund created by the Ministry of Education in 2000, public primary schools in selected districts were provided with the resources for procuring textbooks in order to reduce the burden on poor households. Such costs amount to 15% of the per capita income of the poorest section of the society, which comprises 74% of all Kenyans (Africa/NEPAD, 2002). At the primary school level, the government has introduced the scheme of providing grants to boarding schools in Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) districts with a view to promoting access to education and retention in primary and secondary schools in vulnerable districts and to respond to the needs of pockets of poverty.

5. POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES AND THE RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO EDUCATION

A major challenge consists in making education accessible to an increasing number of children and adults living in poor, illiterate families. Poverty is the greatest obstacle to realizing the right to education. Millions of those living in poverty suffer multiple disadvantages. The situation in Africa requires urgent attention on a priority basis.

As a result of the present education policies, some 40 million African children who do not go to school and 183 million African adult illiterates have been denied even this minimum. . . . The educational systems of most countries leave more and more children, youths and adults without the benefits of development and a greater risk of falling into extreme poverty. At the beginning of this new century when knowledge is of utmost importance, this is a tragedy for more than 50 per cent of the African population. (Africa/NEPAD, 2002)

Making quality basic education accessible to all poor children calls for radically new policy and legal approaches in the context of globalization, which carries with it the danger of creating a market place in knowledge that excludes the poor and the disadvantaged. In a globalized world, allowing a situation to persist where there were educational “haves” and “have-nots” would not only be unacceptable but dangerous (UNESCO, 2000a). The importance of “educating the poor, the excluded and the disadvantaged”—the rural poor but also children and youth in teeming urban slums must receive special consideration, with “unequivocal commitment” to ensuring their access to education. As Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, stated in his address to the First Meeting of the High Level Group on Education for All (2001), we must concentrate on building effective and imaginative strategies for educating the poor, the excluded and the disadvantaged. The struggle against social exclusion and growing poverty must be intensified so that children from poor families are not relegated to the most disadvantaged schools. Fundamental changes are required in the distribution of educational resources, along with positive measures in favor of the disadvantaged groups and children from poor households:

Ensuring access to education for millions of children and adults living in poverty and disadvantaged by economic status, geography, cultural or linguistic barriers or special needs is a core challenge for UNESCO. In order to ensure that the needs of the poor, the excluded and the marginalized are addressed, UNESCO will help build the necessary capacities in national governments and civil society, gather and disseminate best

practices, and stimulate dialogue about inclusive approaches to educational strategies. (UNESCO, 2002c: Para. 64)

As Resolution 2003/24 on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty (UNCHR, 2003) notes, national education authorities in many countries have sought to raise awareness among all children and young people of the existence of extreme poverty and the urgent need for united action to enable the poorest people to regain their rights. The efforts of developing countries—particularly the commitment and determination of African leaders—to address seriously the challenges of poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, economic disparities, instability, and insecurity, through initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD, 2005) and innovative mechanisms such as the World Solidarity Fund for the Eradication of Poverty (United Nations, 2001) testify to this. However, new and additional financial resources need to be provided by the international community to support these initiatives. In addition, when considering the reports of State Parties, the treaty bodies monitoring the application of human rights instruments should take into account the question of extreme poverty and human rights. The aforementioned resolution by the Commission on Human Rights states that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity. Urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them.

6. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Reinforcing normative action is indispensable for advancing the EFA process. This would respond in a significant way to UNESCO’s mission for the pursuit of the “ideal of equal educational opportunities for all.” The very nature of such a mission endows UNESCO’s normative action with ethical and moral dimensions:

to engage Member States and new educational providers in a dialogue highlighting education as a public good and encourage all actors in the field of education to pay due regard in their undertakings to the need for equity, inclusion and social cohesion in today’s societies. (UNESCO, 2002c: Para. 62)

The tasks involved are indeed challenging. Normative action should promote the right to education as both *entitlement* and *empowerment*. Promoting such action should ensure that the right to education can be claimed as a fundamental, inalienable right and that its effective enforcement is also secured by making it justiciable. At the same time, the *empowering* nature of the right to education should be fully recognized, in

appreciation of the centrality of education in people's lives. Both the individual and the society are the beneficiaries of the right to education. In light of this basic observation, the major steps to be taken include: (i) promoting normative action for education for all so that norms and standards developed in collaboration with Member States receive full consideration in actions being undertaken at the national level; (ii) linking normative action with the vision of education provided by UNESCO and the education agenda that is founded upon it; and (iii) strengthening foundations of the right to education in national legal systems for the realization of the right to basic education for all. Given UNESCO's principal role and responsibility within the United Nations system regarding the right to education, the questions related to normative action for EFA as the Organization's priority deserve further reflection.

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PART III

NATIONAL CASE STUDIES

Chapter 12

REACHING THE UNREACHED LEARNER: LIFELONG LEARNING, ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The project, “Lifelong Learning, Adult and Community Education (ACE) in Rural Victoria—Reaching the Unreached Learner,” was undertaken in 2002 by the Centre for Lifelong Learning, Australian Catholic University (ACU National), under the auspices of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) of Victoria, Australia. The project sought to identify the ways in which adult and community education provision is making a difference, to whom and how, and to contribute to the development of an evidence-based approach to policy practice in adult and community education. Particular focus was placed on a case study, the Kyabram Community and Learning Centre, which highlighted good practice in a community where the concept of making connections overcomes the barrier of geographic isolation experienced by a range of participants. From the project arose the recommendation that networks be implemented as a reform strategy in the operationalization of lifelong learning.

This chapter reports on the project, which was designed to address:

- the ways in which adult and community education provision in rural Victoria is making a difference, to whom and how;
- the identification of barriers that impede access to lifelong learning and participation in Adult and Community Education (ACE) in rural Victoria; and
- the identification of existing effective practices and practical, cost-effective ways of providing opportunities to lessen or remove the barriers for lifelong learners within existing resources in Victoria.

It was also intended that the project would:

- contribute to the development of an evidence-based approach to policy and practice in adult and community education;
- contextualize adult and community education provision in the overall provision of lifelong learning;
- help to disseminate good practice and to assist providers to accept, adopt, and implement the successful strategies that have been used to reach the unreached learner; and
- encourage unreached learners to engage in learning from a range of providers.

Three regions were selected by senior personnel from the ACE Division for intensive analysis in the project:

1. Goulburn Ovens Murray Region;
2. Central Highlands Wimmera Region; and
3. Loddon Campaspe and Mallee Region.

The regional studies focused on barriers to participation in, and pathways into and through, adult, community, and further education. Data were collected from tape-recorded interviews with regional directors of ACE and focus group discussions with separate groups of providers, participants, and community leaders in each of the three regions.

2. METHODOLOGIES FOR IDENTIFYING GOOD PRACTICE EXEMPLARS

The process of identifying the good practice exemplars commenced by contacting the regional directors and personnel within the three regional offices to gain their opinions of a range of centers in the region that offered programs recognized for good practice. Consideration was also given to the programs that had received recognition by award in 2001 at the local, regional, or state levels. Initial contact with regional personnel from each nominated center was made to gauge their responses to being classified as offering good practice. This was followed by a phone survey of a random selection of providers of ACE delivery and service across the regions. Further contact was made with some members of local councils, as well as local businesses and service clubs, to gain their views of examples of good practice. In some instances this contact was by means of their membership on regional boards. In the final selection of good practice exemplars, attention was given to the geographic spread, ensuring that there was representation from the three regions, as well as to representation of large providers and small providers offering programs for youth, the unemployed, the disadvantaged, Koorie, business, leisure, health, and the mature aged. Of importance was the issue of showing the diversity of good practice.

Phone contact was made with the nominated centers to gain their permission to include them in the research project. Meetings were then arranged with coordinators, trainers, and participants where possible. Visits were made to centers over a 2-month period. Interviews covered the following areas:

- the barriers that influenced learning opportunity in a course or program;
- the opportunities that the program offered;
- the types of learning experiences in the programs;
- the relevance of the learning experiences and the programs;
- the “impact on life” that resulted from involvement in a program;
- issues to be considered in the future offering of the program; and
- other issues that the participants wished to mention.

This chapter provides a general overview of the geographic context of the three regions, discusses briefly issues relating to education in Victoria, provides examples of successes and challenges in adult and community education, and makes recommendations for furthering the important work of the adult and community education sector in rural and regional Victoria.

3. COUNTRY PROFILE

The geography of rural Victoria plays a significant role regarding access to learning. Some issues of access include:

- isolation of some communities from adult and community education providers;
- physical barriers that exist between certain providers and their nearby communities;
- distances some people have to travel to attend courses in rural Victoria; and
- lack of public and private transport in some communities.

The *Goulburn Ovens Murray Region* of ACE occupies approximately 40,428 square kilometers and is characterized by towns and centers servicing medium intensity agricultural activity. It has a population of 180,000 people aged 15 or older. The region covers a diverse range of communities, including regional cities, and a number of small rural townships, some of which are located in geographically isolated pockets. People in outlying areas are faced with long drives to participate in courses in the regional centers. In other cases the mountains and valleys that mark the regional terrain make access to courses problematic for many.

The *Loddon Campaspe Mallee Region* of ACE covers approximately 51,146 square kilometers. The region serves a population of approximately 275,000, of which 2,863 (or 1%) are indigenous and 10,450 (or 3.8%) are from non-English speaking backgrounds and reside largely in the same areas as the indigenous population. ACE provision for the region is spread very thinly in the north of the region and in outlying areas.

Distance is an even greater factor in the *Central Highlands Wimmera Region*, which is the largest ACE region, covering nearly 54,000 square kilometers (23.6% of the state of Victoria) accommodating approximately 180,000 people (or 3.94%) of the state's population. Largely due to its agricultural base, the region employs the highest proportion of unqualified workers. The region also has a high unemployment rate, particularly among the young, and a vulnerable relationship in areas that rely on a particular type of industry or single manufacturing company. Due to a high proportion of older people and long-term unemployed, the region has a high percentage of low-income earners. In the north, a number of very small rural towns face aging and shrinking populations, loss of industries, government health, and business services.

Taken together, the geography of the three regions and their economic profiles provide the backdrop against which participation in adult and community education occurs.

4. ACCESS POLICIES IN EDUCATION

As a minimum, successful completion of secondary education to Year 12 or its equivalent is widely accepted as a necessary foundation for either effective entry into the labor market and continued employment, or continuing study through some form of postsecondary or tertiary education. It has been adopted in Australia as a policy objective in all states and territories. Achievement of this goal is still elusive, however, and Year 12 completion rates are modest by international yardsticks. Whatever may be achieved in school subjects and learning assignments by age 16 or 17, formal education to the end of secondary schooling cannot be allowed to be any kind of completion, but should be the first stage in a continuing process of individual self-realization and the development of human potential. Continuing, post-compulsory, postschool, tertiary, or adult education within a framework of lifelong learning into old age is therefore quite properly becoming the target as countries grow in understanding of the value of a highly educated populace. A further consideration is the aging of the population. Combined with earlier retirement and a great increase in part-time and contract work, this demographic change means that very large numbers of adults will need opportunities to continue developing, growing intellectually, socially, and culturally into old age.

4.1 Provision in the secondary education sector

According to OECD figures on the population that has attained upper secondary education, Australia falls below the mean of the 30 countries sur-

veyed, for all age groups (25–64). Particularly significant are the low rates for older age groups, which would be lower still for those aged 65 and over (OECD, 2002). However, even with completion of a full secondary education, average performance standards in the basic subjects of the school curriculum, quality of learning—including learning skills—and attainments in the ethical and moral domains, are modest, on average, in universal systems of schooling. Australian school students perform well on international comparisons of attainment in several subjects (OECD, 2001). Yet this performance is uneven. Within average scores there are wide internal disparities, including regional differences. While there is a continuing struggle to raise school participation and completion rates and to ensure a high quality of learning for all students of school age, it is recognized that very large numbers of adults now lack formal qualifications at Year 12 or its equivalent. Moreover, necessary as such a foundation is, it is still insufficient. Knowledge itself is changing too rapidly, as are requirements in working life and civil society. Flexibility and the continuing upgrading of personal and social competence are basic requirements for effective social and economic participation; they are not optional.

4.2 Access promotion in the tertiary sector

There are crucial differences, however, which cannot be overlooked, between education in/for the compulsory years and the postcompulsory years. For formal education, that is, schooling, in childhood and into the adolescent years, Australia, like many other countries, has a long-established, clear, legal base with origins in legislation late in the nineteenth century. This legal framework is grounded in recognition of considerations that are both utilitarian and moral: preparation for civic responsibilities and economic activity and the need for a caring, nurturing environment for young people. For the postcompulsory years different considerations are in play. No general legal requirement is made regarding participation, although there are both moral issues (e.g., equality of opportunity) and a variety of demands—for sociocivic education, employment training, and retraining, personal fulfillment, and so forth, which constitute a culture of provision and persuasion to participate. A key distinction between school and postschool is freedom of choice.

There is now, however, a range of compelling needs, compulsions, and incentives for adults to engage in systematic, continuing learning. The diffusion of communication and information technology means that a majority of households in Australia now has access to the massive information resources of the World Wide Web, an instrument with a vast potential for adult learning. The dramatic growth of tertiary education enrollments,

including a substantial increase in the numbers of mature age students, has raised expectations and stimulated interest in families and communities which have had no history of education beyond the bare minimum (OECD, 1996). In the past, many of these mature age students would have been attending adult evening classes and some indeed have come into universities through this route. A mix of psychological, cultural, social, technological, economic, and ethical factors continues to generate new expectations and even imperatives.

5. ACCESS ISSUES IN THE NONFORMAL SECTOR

Claims are now being heard not only for universal opportunities for continuing learning but also for universal rights and sociocultural economic requirements and obligations. Freedom of choice by learners and flexibility of provision are greatly valued features of the adult and community education tradition. Together with the principle of voluntary work, they are of enduring value and need to be sustained as social and economic pressures lead to greater engagement with public policy issues. The diversity of pressures, requirements, and provision, hence of opportunities to participate in adult continuing education and training is unlikely to diminish, but rather can be expected to grow. The public interest dimension will gather further force. More and clearer pathways to facilitate progression will be needed, together with improvements in determining the level and nature of attainments and recognition of diverse forms of learning. For these purposes, qualifications frameworks are valuable, but recognition is also a matter of closer links between the formal and non-formal sectors.

An example of the link between formal and nonformal sectors is provided by the Kyabram Community and Learning Centre, with its Koorie Curriculum Program. This program includes a range of courses, among which are literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), Koorie youth programs, and Certificates in Koorie Education Training. This latter program began following discussions with interested Koorie women who had been coming to the Centre for a number of years. These discussions resulted in Koorie participants and the Centre developing programs that were premised on the notion of improved learning outcomes being achieved “by the involvement of Indigenous people in education decision-making, equality of access to educational services and equity of participation” (McRae et al., 2000: 7).

A particular strength of the program is the opportunities it offers for Koorie members of the Kyabram community to meet together, thus overcoming a sense of marginalization that can inhibit any sort of overall

community involvement. They also gain knowledge and skills that can be advantageous in fulfilling any plans for their futures. A participant commented: “We help each other learn, and not be afraid to tackle something.” A further strength of the Koorie program is that it uses the Internet to explore family connections, which can be used by any center to work with local Koorie community. It has the capacity to transform lives, as well as the community. It is a framework that adult, community, and further education could use successfully.

Demographic, economic, and social research going beyond head counts is needed to quantify likely demand and to consolidate data on all kinds of provision and participation, both formal and nonformal. The strands of formal-compulsory/informal-voluntary need to be interwoven in the fabric of lifelong learning for all. Policy-makers and providers will need to be much more attentive to such matters as: pathways through and from nonformal into formal learning; diverse ways of recognizing learning attainments; shared funding and other kinds of partnership and collaboration with the private sector; and the quality and value of what is being taught and learned at the adult stage. Adults will generally need to be much better informed than at present about both opportunities and requirements, and prepared to take increased responsibility for their own learning, individually and in groups.

6. WORKPLACE AND TRAINING ACCESS ISSUES

Education and training are the main instruments available to governments and the community to prepare individuals for a rapidly changing, increasingly demanding world of work, and to improve their employability. A critical issue for postcompulsory education and training providers is how best to achieve a smooth transition from school to work and at the same time enhance people’s basic employability. This requires placing an emphasis on both general academic education and the development of portable skills on the one hand, and an occupationally oriented training on the other. There has been a long-term tendency in Australia for teenagers and young adults aged 15–34 to move from rural areas to seek education, employment, and other opportunities. The education level of the local population is one of the key factors, together with telecommunications, roads, lifestyles, and transport access, that businesses consider when deciding where to locate new facilities. In general, the higher the value-added component of productive activity, the higher the skill level required of the workforce. Workforce skill levels are usually indicated by the level of education a population has attained. Therefore, lifting education levels in regional Victoria is likely to have a major impact on attracting new business investment, all conditions

being equal. These conditions include access to low-cost communications through the Internet and the use of other forms of new computerized technology.

It is absolutely vital that regional and rural Victoria be able to provide for a viable and sustainable community of workers and that they in turn contribute to the economic advancement of the local scene, the state, and the nation. For this to happen, there needs to be understanding and acceptance of the connection between education, training, and economic development and the impact of globalization and market economies on the rural sector. Such understanding and acceptance can influence directions for learning. One example of this is the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) offered in the remote regions around Horsham in the Central Highlands Wimmera Region by the Ballarat Community and Further Education. The program involves those who are unemployed and receiving welfare assistance and who have in mind a business initiative they wish to pursue. While the NEIS is a program funded by the Australian government, its importance to regional and rural Victoria is seen in the advancement and livelihood of the region. Of particular benefit is that the people who are able to set up their own business under the NEIS scheme also contribute to the well-being of others and to the economy of a region by offering employment opportunities. The NEIS incentive is one that enhances the region because a new incentive must not cut across any other business currently operating. It must also be a service or enterprise that the region needs. In the NEIS program, progress is achieved through a self-pacing mode and the support of mentors who are involved in business. One participant commented: "The ventures are exciting and worthwhile. It's the learning that makes things happen. Learning is meaningful when the mentors have the skills you need to learn. It is a journey of self-discovery which benefits the community."

7. CASE STUDY OF SUCCESS: KYABRAM COMMUNITY AND LEARNING CENTER— MAKING CONNECTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

The project highlighted particular examples of good practice from across the three regions, which show how some ACE providers have come up with creative solutions to obstacles and barriers. Although it is not suggested that such innovative approaches can or should be simply transplanted into a different environment, it is hoped that they will provide possible starting points for others wishing to extend the participation of adult learners in

their particular region, provider, or field of study. By integrating into their programs, certain overarching elements that relate to the valuing of individual worth for the person and organization, community building, and well-being, the nature of the courses, and the place of learning, located within the heart of the community, ACE providers have indicated a capacity to promote personal fulfillment, social cohesion, and economic advancement amongst their learners.

One specific example of good practice is that provided by the Kyabram Community and Learning Centre, situated in the *Goulburn Ovens Murray Region*, which focuses on the concept of making connections to overcome the barrier of geographic isolation experienced by a range of participants. Making connections is practiced through the Centre heading a cluster that covers two active regions, based on a geographic boundary. The cluster consists of 12 members drawn from providers closest to Kyabram who are already working with the Centre, as well as from providers who are smaller and work in areas some distance away from the Centre.

Making connections is encouraged through the provision of locally inspired approaches to programs that enable connections between communities and individuals, overcome geographic isolation, and promote engagement in learning. The programs are relevant because they address the current and future needs of the participants; in particular there is an emphasis on empowering people who are coping with the barriers of difficult material deprivation and exclusion (Payne, 2000). The Kyabram Community and Learning Centre works with providers to develop strategies that will make connections for participants. The strategies are:

- professional development;
- making connections with other providers;
- expertise with information technology;
- sharing learning by visiting other centers;
- ownership of programs through managing funding; and
- empowerment for providers through initiating programs.

To promote learning, the Kyabram Community and Learning Centre conducts approximately six cluster meetings per year, and each meeting is now combined with a professional development session. The meetings run for approximately 1–1.5 hours, followed by 1/2 hour of networking over supper and then a professional development program or activity, for example, “how to participate in a connected community.” Meetings are rotated, with a point being made to visit all centers so that providers can see what each has to offer and learn about each other’s strengths. While the Centre is well staffed, most other cluster members are sole workers, so they welcome the opportunity to work with and learn from other providers.

Making connections has other connotations in Kyabram. The Youth Program that operates for 4 days per week for 12 months engages participants

in cooking, budgeting, shopping, reading, writing, anger management, and professional development, and they also gain a sense of achievement through shared tasks and shared learning. This is important since the participants are generally disillusioned school leavers, frequently educationally disadvantaged, and sometimes physically or socially disadvantaged.

The Literacy Program consists of offering the Certificate in General Education for Adults (CGEA) 2 days per week. The age range of the 20–25 students is from 15 to 80 (with the majority in the 15–19 years range), male and female again with a high degree of education underachievement. Several participants are ESL students, and there is a small number with disabilities. Generally, there are more female than male students. The learning is achieved in an integrated way, for example, with the participants engaging in the one project while the tutor sets tasks at the level that is appropriate for each participant.

One crucial aspect of the programs is that participants and providers work together to develop learning contexts and strategies that are relevant to their needs and to those of their communities. A high level of trust exists in the social environment, as well as a concern for information sharing and for focusing on individuals. One participant commented: “I gave up study before because I couldn’t keep up at TAFE (Technical and Further Education). People here are concerned about your learning and encourage you. Now I can pick what I want to learn. Here there is concern for the local community. They are asked what they want.”

Also stressed in the programs they offer is the importance of addressing social justice issues and building social capital through networks and cooperative relationships (Schuller and Field, 2002: 81). Working peaceably and constructively with others in families, neighborhoods, and communities is a widely held social and ethical ideal and a responsibility that has implications for the development of social and interpersonal skills. The programs offered by the Kyabram Community and Learning Centre work to connect people to others, to their communities, and to a wider body of knowledge and experience. These programs contribute to “communities of learning,” supported through networks of one form or another, that are designed to make it possible for more rural Victorians to take part in ACE.

8. CHALLENGES IN VARIOUS SECTORS

The Victorian State Government is seeking to develop the attributes of regional economies (including skills formation, knowledge creation and innovation, business formation and growth, business infrastructure and an international focus), as well as building on the strategic capabilities of the Victorian economy (especially in information and communication

technology [ICT], biotechnology, design, new manufacturing technologies, and environmental technologies). While some communities, especially some small rural communities, are having difficulty meeting these challenges and being connected at either a micro- or a macrolevel, there is already evidence of the success of a more integrated, “connected” approach to regional development. For example, the Birchip Cropping Group (BCG) in Birchip, Victoria, demonstrates the power of the group when building for a common cause. A commitment to the prosperity of the community as a whole, through a process of shared solutions, run by farmers for farmers and rural communities, has contributed to the profitability and long-term viability of this small Mallee–Wimmera community.

Birchip is not an isolated example of a community working together for regional development and learning. In Rupanyup, a small community in the Wimmera, local community members provide evidence of how a small community can control its own future, assume and start acting on a significant mind-shift, demonstrating to themselves that they can “do it” by overcoming pessimism, reestablishing the relevance of the agriculture sector, and using business development to achieve positive social change.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

The project, “Reaching the Unreached Learner—Lifelong Learning, Adult and Community Education in Victoria,” has given rise to a range of recommendations that address the learning needs, aims, and plans of adult and community learners in Victoria, especially in its rural and regional sectors. One recommendation is that serious consideration be given to the extension of current cluster and network arrangements in the provision of lifelong learning and adult and community education. Existing structures and relationships in ACE enable it to be not only a provider but also a broker of lifelong learning opportunities, embracing other networks in the community.

Networks are recommended as a reform strategy in the operationalization of lifelong learning. The important point to make about the concept of “network,” however, is that it differs in character from other terms that have historically been used in association with educational institutions and the organizational arrangements with which they are managed and through which innovation and change have typically been brought about. The notion of “network” stresses the idea of “community” as the common element and principle of connection between institutions, organizations, agencies, and people. In this approach, learning providers are not talked of simply as

“clusters,” which connotes geographical proximity, nor as “groups.” Rather, they are seen as being overtly associated with each other in forms of inter-connection and relationship that are deliberately established and worked on in the pursuit of a community of interests, concerns, and goals (Chapman and Aspin, 2003).

10. ACE IN VICTORIA—THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY VERSION OF THE “VILLAGE PUMP”

Adult and community education, by its very nature, must be embedded in the life of the community. As Ann Jarvis from Kergunyah, Victoria, remarked in the course of our study, in rural communities, ACE centers constitute a twenty-first century version of the “village pump”: they spread their irrigating and life-renewing effects through the fields of learning needs, interests, and potential of the community. At a time when regional communities have lost their primary schools and their banks, and when Shires have been amalgamated, ACE provides opportunities for communication, belonging, identity, and support and a central point of focus for endeavor in overcoming the dangers of moves towards a potentially fragmented community. As Greg Naylor of King Valley has commented: “Schools are where children have to go; universities and TAFE are where society and industry want people to go; ACE is where people choose to go.” The notion of ACE as being the place of learning that people *choose* offers a powerful image for profiling ACE as the learning sector of choice for people with their own learning needs, aims, and plans. The concept of “choosing to learn” for personal growth and fulfillment, economic advancement, and social well-being are intertwined in the personal, communal, and economic goals of lifelong learning. All of these must be offered and made available, in whatever forms, modes, or styles, in schemes of ACE to cater to the needs of all adult and community learners in Victoria—and nowhere more than in its rural and regional parts.

11. CONCLUSION

Our study highlights the many successful and exemplary practices that are evident in ACE in Victoria. In looking to the future, we wish to confirm and strengthen the traditions, values, and practices that have given ACE in Victoria its character and provided the ground and framework for its extension and elaboration in the future.

As we face the challenges of the twenty-first century, in a context of:

- changing economic, social, technological, and political conditions;
 - changing approaches to learning and understanding knowledge;
 - renewed emphasis on the importance of community; and
 - a growing policy emphasis on lifelong learning and its linkage to regional development,
- we believe that there is now a need to develop innovative and creative solutions to the problems of providing adult and community education, particularly for regional and rural Victoria.

Data on Australia—selected items

Item	Data	Male	Female
Surface area ^a (in square kilometers)	7,692,024 ²	–	–
Population ^b	19,960,304 million (projected number as at 9/10/03)	–	–
Projected life expectancy at birth ^c		77 years	82 years
Population growth rate over previous 12 months ^d	1.4%	–	–
Urban population ^e	16,528,021		
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ^f	183,578 (June 2003)		
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ^g (per capita)	9,239		
Public expenditure on education as percentage of GDP ^h	4.4%		
Public expenditure on education as percentage of total government expenditure ⁱ	5.9%		
Literacy skills ^j	* Poor to very poor prose literacy skills—6.2 million Literacy skills adequate to cope with many (but not all demands of daily life—4.7 million Prose literacy skills of a high order—2.3 million	No sex split available (probably not considered necessary for Australian data)	No sex split available
Primary teacher proportions by sex ^k		29.0	71.0
Secondary teacher proportions by sex ^l		44.9	55.1

Data on Australia—selected items (*Continued*)

Apparent retention rate of secondary school students to Year 12 ^m		68.9	79.4
Proportions of Government and Nongovernment schools ⁿ	69% Government; 31% Nongovernment	—	—
Gross primary enroll ^o		570,510	542,392
Private enrollment as percentage of total enrollment ^p (primary)	44.43%		
Pupil–teacher ratio ^q (primary)	1–24.8		
Pupil–teacher ratio ^r (secondary)	1–25		

Note: The most current data available is contained in this table.

^aAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia, 2003 (Cat. No. 1301.0), Geography and Climate, p1, <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^bAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia, 2002 (Cat. No. 1301.0), Population, Population Clock, p1, <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^cAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Deaths (Cat. No. 3302.0), 2001.

^dAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia, 2002 (Cat. No. 1301.0), Population, <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^eAustralian Bureau of Statistics Year Book, Australia, 2003 (Cat. No. 2035.0), Population, p. 11.

^fAustralian Bureau of Statistics, G10 Gross Domestic Product, <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^gAustralian Bureau of Statistics, G10 Gross Domestic Product, <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^h[Abs.gov.au/Ausstatabs/abs@nsf/0/83da15df20868ff7cae000f007?Open document](http://Abs.gov.au/Ausstatabs/abs@nsf/0/83da15df20868ff7cae000f007?Open%20document).

ⁱcpa.org.au/garchives5/1118vinson.html.

^jAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Aspects of Literacy (Cat. No. 4228.0), 1997, Media Release, <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^kAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Schools, 2002 (Cat. No. 4221.0), <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^lAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Schools, 2002 (Cat. No. 4221.0), <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^mAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Schools, 1998 (Cat. No. 4221.0), <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

ⁿAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Schools, 2000 (Cat. No. 4221.0), <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

^oAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Schools, 2002 (Cat. No. 4221.0).

^pAustralian Bureau of Statistics, Schools, 2002 (Cat. No. 4221.0).

^qhttp://det.gov.au/det/resources/pdf/3yr_report.pdf.

^rhttp://det.gov.au/det/resources/pdf/3yr_report.pdf.

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Chapter 13

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION ISSUES IN NEW ZEALAND ADULT, COMMUNITY, AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

Brian Findsen

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a historical tendency for Aotearoa New Zealand society to be complacent about adults' participation in formal education opportunities. This is related to the myth that effective schooling has made New Zealand into a functionally literate nation and that everyone has equal educational opportunity. Over the last decade, however, this myth has been dramatically exposed as invalid as marginalized groups have become restive and begun to demand better educational opportunities both in the formal system and in nonformal contexts.

In this chapter I explore the issue of access and participation in Adult and Community Education (ACE) and tertiary education in New Zealand. To make the context for this enquiry easier to understand, I first provide background on recent changes in education by investigating the broader social, cultural, political, and economic context.

I then introduce the character of both the ACE sector and the allied tertiary education sector. Both have become more closely aligned in education policy after the recent establishment of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The advent of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and its associated framework came about because much of what now occurs in both ACE and tertiary education is connected to its structure and underlying ideology.

I then further explore the relationship between ACE and the tertiary education system, particularly as governmental policy in both arenas emphasizes provision for "priority groups" that previously were largely excluded from educational opportunity. Next I traverse aspects of participation in the two domains with a focus on marginalization. Finally, to anchor the discussion in practical reality, I provide an example of how one major strategy to

promote greater access and participation, bridging education, is manifested in three programs connected with the School of Education at the Auckland University of Technology. This approach has purportedly promoted the life chances of Maori and Pasifika students.

2. THE SOCIETAL CONTEXT

It is not possible to comprehend the levels of differential educational participation of varying groups in New Zealand fully unless the wider cultural, political, and economic context is made explicit. This chapter is written from the perspective of political economy, that is to say, access and participation in education is subjected to critique in view of the uneven distribution of material goods, the overarching influence of mainstream colonial society in defining who gets what kind of education, the oppression experienced by subordinate groups in their access to higher status knowledge, and the interrelationships among social class, ethnicity, and gender in determining who benefits most from the existing system. The pattern of discrimination from within the compulsory schooling system is reproduced, though perhaps more subtly, in the adult and community education sector and quite explicitly in the tertiary education arena. In acknowledgment of this differential treatment of marginalized groups, some groups, such as indigenous Maori, have asserted their right to self-determination regarding their own educational systems so as to maximize the success of youth and adults alike.

The political environment in New Zealand has been quite stable, despite a change of system from First Past the Post (FPP) to Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) elections in the mid-1990s. While in the past either National (center right) or Labor (center left) held sway, MMP has resulted in coalition governments. At present the Labor-led coalition government is into its third term of 3 years. Traditionally, as Benseman (1996b) points out, a Labor-based party has meant more funding and support for ACE, since left-wing governments tend to provide greater support to social spending. Economically and ideologically, New Zealand has experienced a significant change towards the New Right. Hence, the country has undergone “streamlining” practices, including reductions in the public sector, the sale of public assets (e.g., the railways and the postal system), deregulation, and the implementation of user-pays across many sectors, including education. According to some commentators, the “minimal state” has been created, resulting in a new society of marked differences in wealth (Hazeltine, 1998; Kelsey, 1999).

Culturally, the two principal ethnic groups numerically have been indigenous Maoris and colonizer Europeans. A founding Treaty of Waitangi, signed

in 1840 between the Crown and tribes of Maori in the North, has recently been invoked as a blueprint for interaction between Maori and *Pakeha* (Europeans) and as a basis for reconciliation. The principles of protection, participation, and partnership were enshrined in the Treaty, though not necessarily interpreted in the same way by different groups. Today's New Zealand is very much a heterogeneous society, with large numbers of Pasifika peoples having settled, especially after major migration in the 1960s, when industries needed cheap labor. Especially in Auckland diverse ethnic groups rub shoulders and the educational system is multicultural, while at an official level biculturalism prevails. Priority in state resources is afforded the indigenous Maori, in recognition of their special status under the Treaty as *tangata whenua* (people of the land). Other significant groups, such as Pasifika nations' peoples and Asian immigrants, constitute minorities whose cultural and educational needs are contested as part of mainstream provision.

Neoliberal reforms in society at large have been mirrored in educational institutions. New Right principles of individual choice, minimal state intervention in social policy, economic efficiency, and heightened accountability (Lauder, 1990) have been experienced in the country's schools, social services, private training establishments (PTEs), and tertiary education alike. The effects in education—which Bates (1990) has dubbed “a cult of efficiency”—can be identified in increased attention to charters, strategic planning, quality management systems, contestability for funds, and an escalation of the “enrollment economy.” The consequences of economic rationalism have resulted in greater pain for the most vulnerable—Maori and Pasifika peoples, workers, many women, beneficiaries, and many older adults. As will be shown below, ACE and tertiary education have not been exempt from these changes, and the impact on the marginalized society has been profound.

In the next section I sketch a context for and map of ACE and tertiary education in the Aotearoa New Zealand. The underlying theme throughout this analysis is that, despite efforts to increase minorities' participation and achievement levels, the dominant *Pakeha* group maintains considerable advantage in terms of access, participation levels, and positive outcomes (Coxon et al., 1994; Olssen and Morris Matthews, 1997; Boshier and Benseman, 2000).

3. ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION: THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

The history of governmental support for the field of ACE echoes that of many other countries: very little and unpredictable. As the Cinderella of the educational system (perhaps alongside early childhood education), ACE has never

seemed to merit serious injection of financial resources from the state. Nor has it featured in what might be considered a learning society, where lifelong learning is promoted and practiced. Rather, the support has been inconsistent and only very recently has it been incorporated into a more coherent plan for economic revitalization and deemed desirable for an educated citizenry (Tertiary Education Commission, 2002). In the early 1980s the National Council of Adult Education (NCAE) appointed field officers in adult education domains that required enhancement: Maori language, adult literacy, radio/television broadcasting, and training and development. But this kind of state-funded intervention at the national level has been more rare than customary.

Just what is ACE in the New Zealand context? In a landmark publication concerning the field, *The Fourth Sector: Adult and Community Education in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Benseman et al., 1996), the term “adult and community education” is defined by the Adult and Community Education Association (Aotearoa New Zealand) as: “organised learning activities that groups or individuals undertake for their personal, community, cultural or economic development. It touches all other areas of learning but its primary focus is the adult as learner and the community as context” (Tobias, 1996: 42). Furthermore, the field is characterized as responsive to learners’ needs and aspirations, having considerable flexibility in the conditions in which learning is offered.

The field of ACE covers five main domains (Tobias, 1996: 42):

- adult basic education;
- second-chance education, which opens the way to further formal education, training, and/or employment;
- personal development education, which enables an individual to live in a family, group, or community;
- cultural education, which enables a person to participate in the life of their community; and
- education to facilitate group and community development.

This definition of the field consists of the philosophical diversity prevalent in most countries. What is missing in this definition, and is in fact more typical of the New Zealand context, is an explicit connection with social justice issues and democratic decision-making processes.

What characterizes the ACE field is its diversity in terms of purposes, location, structures and processes of provision, and funding sources. Importantly, ACE is not divorced from tertiary education. While there is a large proportion of ACE that has little direct relationship with what happens in tertiary education, there are significant intersections between ACE and the tertiary sector made more explicit by very recent changes signaled by the TEC.

Returning to the definition of adult and community education, in her attempt to map the field in the 1990s, Harré Hindmarsh (1996) identified some leading *national community* organizations:

- The Adult Reading and Learning Assistance Association (ARLA), which has since become Literacy Aotearoa;
- The Rural Education Activities Programmes (REAPs) in small towns;
- The New Zealand Federation of Workers Education Associations (WEA), which was first established in 1915;
- Parents Centres New Zealand Inc. (60 centers providing birth and parent education);
- Te Ataarangi (a Maori language renaissance program geared at fostering oral fluency);
- Project/Network Waitangi (an organization to educate the general public on the meaning of the Treaty of Waitangi); and
- Country Women's Institutes (focusing on the needs of rural women).

In addition to this list of ACE agencies, there is a host of other organizations that provide education as a *subsidiary* function. These include:

- Young Men's and Women's Christian Association (YMCA and YWCA);
- Maori Women's Welfare League;
- Relationship Services (formerly New Zealand Marriage Guidance);
- Aotearoa New Zealand Community Workers Association;
- National Collective of Women's Refuges; and
- Combined Trade Unions.

Another significant provider of ACE in New Zealand has been school-based community education. These are predominantly high schools that have made their facilities available to adults in the community on evenings and weekends for short courses and seminars in a wide variety of subjects. Community education services in schools are semiautonomous, receiving some funding from Vote:Education for more "essential" skill development (e.g., literacy classes, communication skills, classes to enhance employment prospects), but also having the freedom to recover costs on other learning opportunities (e.g., dancing). These school-based providers suit some people (usually white middle-class *Pakeha*), but have been less effective in attracting ethnic minorities and working class people whose experiences of schooling are more likely to be negative (Findsen and Lomas, 1993).

The line between adult and community education and tertiary education is blurred. In the tertiary sector, the universities and polytechnics have traditionally offered both credit and noncredit classes of interest to the general public. The universities have tended to concentrate on liberal education; the polytechnics, on vocational and skills-based education. In the university scene, the original university extensions in the traditional universities (Auckland, Victoria, Canterbury, and Otago) were usually remodeled into centers for continuing education. Each university developed its own pathway, albeit heavily influenced by the dominant model of extramural studies

transplanted from Britain. Provision has been dominated by middle-class preoccupations as reflected in the curriculum (Findsen and Harré Hindmarsh, 1996). For instance, where I worked in the mid- to late 1990s at the University of Auckland, the Centre for Continuing Education (the university's main outreach mechanism) focused on public education courses and seminars, continuing professional education (e.g., for engineers), summer schools, and preparatory and bridging programs for adults returning to study for a degree (e.g., New Start). As a liberal education provider of continuing education, the University of Auckland has tended to steer clear of skills-based programs in favor of those that accentuate intellectual activity. Only the bridging courses in the above list concentrate on the remedial–compensatory function of education wherein people with lesser cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1974) can feel comfortable in an elite system.

4. FUNDING IN ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Historically, funding of ACE has been uneven and sometimes subject to political favour. The government has funded mainstream programs through the Ministry of Education in universities, school-based community education, polytechnics, REAPs, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Home Tutors Schemes, refugee education, and adult literacy, to name a few outlets. In the 2000–2001 academic year, the government allocated NZ\$38.28 million to ACE, representing only 0.5% of the spending on education and less than 3% of what was spent on tertiary education allocation (AECLWP, 2001). The dominant trend has been for the government to minimize fees to participants for “core” life skills courses (e.g., ESOL, adult basic education) and expect other programs to be made available on a full user-pays basis. Most ACE providers rely on a combination of funding sources—state provision (not always through the Ministry of Education, but also via other ministries); money raised through participants' fees; and occasional public grants if they are fortunate enough to acquire them. Those agencies outside the immediate publicly funded schemes typically struggle to keep a viable program in operation and rely heavily on volunteer labor, especially from women and older adults. Within the state-funded system, life skills programs in ACE receive higher funding priority than less “essential” learning activities, such as in the humanities.

In a very recent review of ACE (AECLWP, 2001) current funding issues were addressed. The Adult Education and Community Learning Working Party identified three key issues:

1. inequitable funding systems for ACE in the community;
2. inequitable funding for national organizations; and
3. insecure and limited funding for the ACE sector.

In establishing priorities for ACE funding, the Working Party also identified the following key areas:

- priority learning groups;
- social development; and
- emerging needs including local responsiveness and innovation.

The priority learner groups were identified as those falling into these categories:

- those with no or limited school qualifications;
- those with a low level of literacy;
- those residents who have English as their second language;
- those with low socioeconomic status;
- those who are unemployed; and
- groups whose culture is threatened.

It is noteworthy that these groups are very marginalized in New Zealand society. Their educational attainment levels are low and their human capital needs are considerable.

5. THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Over the last decade the tertiary education sector has undergone unprecedented change from a largely elite system to one that is “massified” and increasingly diverse. In this chapter the tertiary sector is understood as:

- eight universities (including the relatively new Auckland University of Technology);
- several colleges of education (formerly teachers’ training colleges, some of which have melded with universities);
- twenty-three polytechnics (some remodeled as institutes of technology);
- three *whare wananga* (Maori-controlled tertiary institutions); and
- several hundred PTEs—in travel and hospitality, business, language acquisition, education providers, religious institutions, etc.

The general trend in tertiary provision has been towards diversity of provision (state-funded alongside privately conducted establishments), tighter central control of quality, and an expansion of curricula. For example, the colleges of education now offer a fuller range of learning opportunities than just teacher education. Yet this diversification of the tertiary education system does not hide the reality that there is considerable stratification across the different types of institution (e.g., between a university and a PTE) and within subsystems. Within the polytechnic system, for example, a large polytechnic such as UNITEC in West Auckland is in a different

financial league from a provincial city provider in Northland. Access to respective tertiary institutions is differential even though New Zealand has maintained an open adult admissions policy. (Entry to a university can occur at age 20, thus encouraging mature-aged students to reengage with education, but access to some degree programs is quite limited.) Entry to most PTEs requires minimal qualifications, while admission to some university professional programs is extremely competitive. Hence, the composition of the student body tends to reflect prior access to cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1974), such as a family history of university participation and significant financial resources to enable students to have an unfettered pathway to success.

6. THE NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

In the mid- to late 1980s and into the 1990s there were considerable governmental efforts to make education more accessible to greater numbers of people from early childhood to tertiary education and ACE. In the school system, for example, administrative reforms in 1989 heralded more control of local schools by Boards of Trustees (BOTs), where parents and community members were elected to help to govern schools. Funding came directly from the Ministry of Education to individual schools, bypassing previous levels of bureaucracy. Another feature of attempts to democratize access to education was the establishment of the NZQA and its associated framework of eight levels. The new qualifications framework was designed to develop a flexible, modularized system, where competency is recognized through the achievement of “unit standards” (statements of learning outcomes achieved by learners). Such standards were developed by industries and stakeholders to orient the education system away from norm-based towards competency-based assessment. Level 1 is equivalent to the fifth form in high school and level 8 is equivalent to a postgraduate qualification. The government’s intent was to break down the divide between academic and work-based learning to make learning more flexible and portable.

On the surface, this framework has much to benefit adult learners. Skills and knowledge acquired in the workplace could be validated as equivalent to those gained in a classroom. Many adults from marginalized groups, especially the Maori, could gain some level of qualification where success is emphasized rather than failure (contrary to what a norm-based system tends to do to those students who do not pass exams). Unfortunately, the

universities have not embraced this framework (the exception being the new University of Technology, which emerged from a polytechnic background and which still has many certificates at levels 3 and 4 in what other universities might perceive as preuniversity courses). In general, the universities have guarded their autonomy and have wanted to award their own qualifications. They have consistently argued that it is ineffectual to translate higher-level cognitive abilities or abstract knowledge into learning outcomes. They propose that not all education should be reduced to predetermined outcomes since it devalues the processes of education and does not reward excellence in achievement (Peddie, 1996). Aside from the university sector, other tertiary providers have used the framework in their curriculum development and successfully provided a staircase for students from low levels of achievement to more advanced. In particular, the PTE sector, which consists of over 800 providers of language institutes, business schools, religious institutions, etc., has embraced the framework as a means of systematizing what otherwise might have been an incoherent structure for education.

6.1 Participation in ACE

It is not easy to quantify who gets different kinds of education in the ACE system due to its diversity and fragmentation. Nevertheless, some agencies attract specific groups. Obviously, a program such as Te Ataarangi is designed to attract primarily Maori participants; Parents Centres reach soon-to-be parents, usually of a middle-class origin; Literacy Aotearoa, a bicultural agency, has two arms, Maori and *Pakeha*, and its ethos and methodologies vary according to each respective division; the REAPs provide the rural sector with a full range of both credit and noncredit programs that reflect learning needs of local geographical community. The larger institutions, such as community education services in schools, attract white, middle-class clientele apart from courses specifically designed for priority groups for low or no payment.

In the 2001 report on the role of ACE in Aotearoa New Zealand, the following observation was made (AECLWP, 2001: 28):

A 1990 summary of this research (Benseman, 1992) is consistent with international findings that showed ACE provision in the following groups are under-represented: Maori; Pacific people; refugees; the disabled; older adults; the unemployed; unskilled and semi-skilled workers; some groups of women (household mothers, women from lower socioeconomic groups); some rural populations and increasingly, men.

New Zealand research on participation has included national studies (e.g., Bird and Fenwick, 1981), studies within a region (e.g., Waghorne, 1975), studies of individual providers (e.g., Benseman, 1980), and studies of social or professional groups (e.g., Tobias, 1988). In *The Fourth Sector* Benseman (1996a) traverses the territory of participation in ACE in more detail, while more recently Tobias (2001) has updated the situation by focusing on methodological issues and more detailed analysis of which groups got what kinds of education in the period of the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s. His analysis includes comparisons of groups of adults according to prior participation in schooling, varying age cohorts, employment profiles, gender differences, and rural/urban differences. Tobias (2001: 10–11), among other conclusions, points to the following:

- Much of the evidence confirms previous findings. Older people, the unemployed, and women with dependent children continue to be under-represented.
- Participation in formal tertiary education increased considerably, while participation in educational programs oriented to the arts and crafts, and cultural, political, and social objectives, fell away equally significantly.
- The continuation of the “divide” in educational participation rates between those with relatively little and those with extensive formal schooling, although the extent has changed (reduced) somewhat over this period.

In summary, participation in ACE in Aotearoa tends to follow international trends, though the idiosyncratic character of its population has led to special attempts to maximize access and participation for nontraditional groups. The very recent incorporation of ACE into the TEC may jeopardize the willingness of such groups to participate unless the form of education is appropriate and the funding mechanisms are kept simple.

6.2 Participation in the tertiary education sector

As noted above, this field has become increasingly diversified and includes institutions whose charters are defined by Maori for Maori—the ethos, pedagogy, and outcomes are under the control of Maori as part of their *tinio rangatiratanga* (self-determination) (Yates, 1996). Access and participation of Maori have been increased significantly by the establishment of *whare wananga* (houses of advanced learning), and they have functioned as a realistic alternative for Maori (*Pakeha* are not excluded) to mainstream tertiary education after attending *kura kaupapa Maori* (Maori immersion or oriented secondary schools). However, while the short-term prognosis is very good, it is too early to judge the longer-term effectiveness

of these institutions in helping to fulfill Maori aspirations for lifelong learning.

From the files of the Ministry of Education, it is possible to get glimpses of patterns of participation in tertiary education. One cultural pattern evident in the larger cities (Auckland and Wellington) has been recent “Asianization” as governments have opened the doors of immigration more widely to include more cultural diversity. While people identifying with Asian ethnicity made up 8% of the population aged 15 and over in 2002, they constituted nearly 15% of the domestic tertiary population in this age cohort (not including Asian international students). At degree level and above, Asian students (domestic and international) have by far the highest participation rates of any group. This phenomenon is partly explained by the younger age structure of Asians in New Zealand. In comparison with other groups, a clear majority of Asian students (53%) studied at universities, 28% in polytechnics, and 20% in PTEs. This illustrates the propensity of Asians to choose the highest status education institutions and achieve success within them.

In terms of age, the student population has been getting older. Whereas in 1994 students under 25 made up 52% of all formal students, by 2002 this had dropped to 44%. Students over the age of 40 represented 22% of all students in 2002 as compared with 16% in 1994. The growth of Maori older students contributed to about one-third of this growth in mature-age students (Ministry of Education, 2003). Increasingly, universities are no longer the preserve of high school graduates; they are becoming places where people return to education to equip themselves better with work and life skills.

The age distributions of other tertiary institutions do not follow those of universities. For instance, polytechnics attract 45% of all 15–17-year-old students (while universities have 55% of 18–24-year-olds.). Interestingly, 37% of 25–39-year-old students go to polytechnics and 39% of all post-40 students. Students at the three *whare wananga* are generally much older than in other subsectors. Around 80% are over 25. Maori tend to be underrepresented in the core 18–24 age group (14%). As for first-time tertiary students, in 2002, 58% were over 25 years (Ministry of Education, 2003).

In the battle of the sexes, participation by women continues to grow faster than that of men, with nearly 57% of students being women (up from 52% in 1994). While just over half of the students in universities, polytechnics, and PTEs are women, four out of five college students are female and three out of four in *wananga* are women. Hence, women tend to occupy more places in “lower status” institutions and, while Maori may find access to tertiary education less problematic than previously, they are less likely to encounter “high status” subjects or professional training.

7. THE CONVERGENCE OF ACE AND THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

The distinction between ACE and tertiary education is more arbitrary than real. For example, does one count continuing education in universities as ACE or tertiary education? Clearly, it is both. The newly established TEC has sought to unify these sectors under its jurisdiction. The publication *The New Tertiary Landscape* (TEC, 2002: 5) points to a tertiary education system “characterised by excellence, relevance and improved access for all learners.” Steve Maharey, the Associate Minister of Education asserts (p. 9):

The tertiary education sector embraces all learning that occurs in our post-school world. It covers all forms of tertiary education and training—learning in universities, *wananga*, colleges of education, polytechnics and private training establishments, as well as in the workplace and local communities. It also covers research and doctoral study in research institutes, enterprises and universities.

The Commission has adopted a 5-year blueprint for a more collaborative and cooperative tertiary system. Its six national goals are:

- economic transformation;
- social development;
- Maori development;
- environmental sustainability;
- infrastructural development; and
- innovation.

Quite clearly, there is a mix of social justice and market-oriented objectives, reminiscent of earlier Labor Governments’ endeavors to counterbalance market liberalism with social equity goals. Aligned with these goals are six strategies:

1. strengthen system capability and quality;
2. contribute to the achievement of Maori development aspirations;
3. raise foundation skills so that all people can contribute in our knowledge society;
4. develop the skills New Zealanders need for our knowledge society;
5. educate for Pacific peoples’ development and success; and
6. strengthen research, knowledge creation, and uptake for our knowledge society.

In the above strategies, items 2 and 5 identify two specific populations in need of additional resources in education. Item 3 emphasizes the need to concentrate on “foundation skills”; item 4 relates to more generic skills expected of all New Zealanders. In both cases of Maori and Pacific peoples, the participation and achievement levels in mainstream education of

these two significant minority groups are below the national norm, though indigenous-based initiatives by Maori for Maori are beginning to make a tangible difference to their life-chances (Jones et al., 1995).

The Commission has recently incorporated ACE within its definition of tertiary education. According to the Commission, the ACE sector “promotes and facilitates the engagement of adults in lifelong learning, with few barriers to participation” (TEC, 2002: 14). The document identifies adult literacy and ESOL as areas where an action plan for the development of new policy and improved funding are of special concern. The scope of ACE, in this document, also includes:

- an Industry Training Strategy (involving 46 Industry Training Organizations);
- more modern apprenticeships focusing on youths aged 16–21;
- continuing Training Opportunities Programmes to provide foundational and vocational skills at levels 1–3 on the qualifications framework;
- an alternative youth training stream; and
- a program of skill enhancement to provide vocational training designed to meet the needs of young Maori and Pacific learners (who often are earlier school leavers).

What is remarkable about these changes is that the identity of ACE as a community-based educational enterprise is at severe risk. The “capture” of ACE within tertiary education seems to relate as much to bureaucratic convenience and differential power relations as it does to the benefit of a struggling field. The promise of more secure funding under the TECs wing needs to be counterbalanced against a possible loss of autonomy. On the other hand, the alignment of ACE with workplace learning cuts across traditional boundaries in a way that suggests that “lifelong learning” is a more appropriate label to use rather than “adult and community education” to relate to adult learning in myriad contexts.

Having explained the policy context of ACE in New Zealand and its ambivalent connections with tertiary education, I will now explain some strategies used at a more localized level to encourage greater participation of disenfranchised groups into education.

8. BRIDGING EDUCATION

The need for tertiary providers to provide pathways for reluctant learners to gain access has been taken seriously by both universities and polytechnics alike. As part of the “massification of education” (Evans and Abbott, 1998), the move away from provision of the elite to the populace, tertiary providers have sought to attract minority groups, especially Maori and Pasifika students. As defined by Benseman and Russ (2003: 45), programs of bridging

or access education are “aimed at giving learners the requisite academic skills that will enable them to enrol in other tertiary programs to which they would not otherwise have been able to gain entry.” These programs have developed more out of individual institution’s initiative than out of explicit governmental policy. While most have been oriented towards teaching academic skills and offering introductions to tertiary subjects, there have been some that have aimed at recruiting specific groups of women, and the Maori and Pasifika peoples.

The survey conducted by Benseman and Russ sampled all 8 universities and 23 polytechnics with 29 returned questionnaires representing 86 different programs. The majority of the programs were described as “bridging” or “foundation”; some had been in operation for over a decade; most were at levels 4, 5, or 6 on the NZQA framework; subjects included nursing, science, business, and teaching. In terms of ethnicity, nearly half were *Pakeha*, 29.2% Maori, 15.4% Pasifika, and less than 5% Asian. These data suggest that many of these programs fulfill social equity goals, introducing “non-traditional” students to the tertiary education arena.

9. A CASE STUDY AT THE AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

In 2000 the Auckland Institute of Technology (AUT) became a university after having been the largest polytechnic in the largest city. This case study focuses on a site in 2003 within the Faculty of Arts, which hosts over 40% of the annual student intake of around 20,000. The Faculty included: *Te Ara Poutama* (Maori Development) and the Schools of Art and Design, Education, Social Sciences, Communication, Hotel and Hospitality, and Languages. This institution, having converted from a polytechnic, has a significant proportion of “lower level” courses on the NZQA framework (levels 3–5) which staircase into degree programs (levels 5–7). From its earlier heritage, it brought with it a strong history of bridging and foundation programs. Students who enter foundation, bridging, or access programs are either straight out of school (usually having left with minimal qualifications) or mature-aged, many of whom are either Maori or Pasifika students. In this section, I introduce some of these programs as a snapshot of what one section of a faculty is doing in one university in terms of social equity initiatives.

Most tertiary education courses combine knowledge creation, dissemination, or reconstruction with cognitive development and skills-based learning. The general goal of these certificate programs is to enhance the self-esteem of learners, provide some basic level life competencies, and improve social and academic skills. These open-entry courses of a semester’s or year’s duration are offered across the faculties and across schools

within a faculty—the focus in this chapter is on the School of Education, which provides bridging courses that attract significant numbers of marginalized students (Maori, Pasifika, older students). These courses help to fulfill the goal of social equity for the School and the AUT. In this context, “social equity” refers to providing additional resources to groups who have been disenfranchised from the mainstream (education) system.

In the School of Education at AUT, there is a range of certificate courses with an emphasis on Early Childhood Education (ECE). The School is best known for its work in this academic arena, which reflects the dire need for suitably qualified teachers in preschool, kindergarten, and *kohanga reo* (Maori language nests) environments in New Zealand. At the first level of provision, level 3, a Certificate in Introduction to Early Childhood Education is offered which is designed to be completed in a semester. It is an open-entry course with a minimal standard of academic literacy expected. The learning outcomes for this certificate include:

- learn how to develop effective relationships with children;
- develop and demonstrate effective communication with peers, teachers, and children in early childhood education contexts;
- develop and strengthen self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-understanding and undertake management of personal wellness; and
- demonstrate knowledge of appropriate relationships with children.

The curriculum focuses on child development, communication skills, *tikanga Maori* (Maori culture and customs), professional inquiry and practice (including practical experience in a range of early childhood centers), academic literacy, and curriculum and resources. As can be inferred from the learning outcomes and content, the course very much encourages life and academic skills development, including personal, social, professional, and cultural capabilities. Most of these outcomes are what we would expect citizens of New Zealand to acquire and practice in daily life. In effect, the course is concerned with building the academic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1974) for these students to enter university with greater confidence.

At a more advanced level, in which some of the graduates of the level 3 Certificate could enroll, is the Certificate in ECE. This certificate is undertaken in its own right as a 1-year professional education program for early childhood workers and it can, in some instances, function as the first year of the Bachelor of Education degree, leaving two further years for students to complete. Entry to this program for school leavers is related to established norms for university entrance, while there remains opportunity for adults over 20 to enter via provisional admission. In both cases, interviews are held to establish professional suitability as defined by the New Zealand Teachers’ Council. The overall purpose of the certificate is to “enable students to gain confidence and competence in a range of abilities and skills necessary to work with children and families, in family homes as nannies

or as beginning educators in early childhood centres” (AUT, 2002). The 1-year program consists of papers in:

- early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand;
- human development and learning;
- professional inquiry and practice;
- health and safety;
- family, *whanau*, and society; and
- *matauranga Maori* (Maori knowledge).

The curriculum reflects the demands for practical knowledge and social skills required for an effective ECE educator. The advantage of an incremental system, as described here, is that students can enter at a level matching their prior experience and academic abilities and complete initial or more advanced professional qualifications. Many students from marginalized backgrounds are able to enter at a less daunting academic level and subsequently progress.

A new program, which developed from seed money from the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the City of Manukau Education Trust (an independent agency associated with the local city council), was the Manukau Family Literacy Programme (MFLP). Two school sites were chosen in South Auckland (a part of Auckland inhabited by people from lower socioeconomic groups, consisting of high proportions of Maori and Pasifika peoples). In one of these the School of Education at AUT became the tertiary education partner in a family literacy program where parents of children in the local kindergarten and primary school joined together over an extended semester to complete the Certificate in Introduction to ECE. AUT appointed an adult educator who worked exclusively on site and became part of the community of predominately Pasifika peoples. The curriculum of the Certificate was sufficiently generic and the educator adeptly skillful at integrating the adults’ prior experiences and aspirations with the content of the Certificate. No students paid fees, but they were expected to be active participants.

From the 15 adults who commenced in 2003 the program, 11 graduated with a Certificate, the vast majority having already gone on to further formal learning opportunities. These people’s levels of confidence were considerably enhanced, their actual work outputs being at least commensurate with other students in the Akoranga AUT campus. The Minister of Education took a personal interest in the students, and the 2004 program was extended to four sites. While it is acknowledged that the program was expensive in terms of resources for a relatively small number of students, it does demonstrate that with an appropriate pedagogical environment much can be achieved for adult students who would normally not go anywhere near a university.

It is tempting to generalize from these three programs, which have nurtured the development of diffident students and encouraged them to succeed. By now some students from the level 3 Certificate have progressed

into degree programs and completed first degrees. As many of these students are from nontraditional groups (mainly Pasifika), this is quite an achievement. It bestows on them a professional qualification and puts them in a position to have significant impact on ensuing generations.

10. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided background and insights into the issues of access and participation in the allied fields of ACE and tertiary education as subsets of a lifelong education system. The climate of change in the political, economic, and cultural affairs of Aotearoa New Zealand has been tracked into ACE, where market liberalism, with its emphasis on individualism and competition, has had enormous impact on traditionally disenfranchised groups, particularly indigenous Maori and Pasifika nations peoples. Counterbalancing such economic rationalism has been the bid for social equity exemplified by the Treaty of Waitangi and its commitment to Maori to preserve their cultural heritage, including education.

Each society has its own peculiar dynamics, and New Zealand as a colonized country has derived many of its social structures from the United Kingdom. Historically, the education system has been derivative of this tradition and has rendered other knowledge less visible and worthy of study. For instance, Maori language and knowledge have struggled for credibility in *Pakeha* society, and it is only in the last few decades that more enlightened positions have been taken by governments to support Maori self-determination. There is now a viable alternative education system in which Maori pedagogy is given precedence, a system that is yielding very positive outcomes for younger generations. In addition, the implementation of the NZQA framework has provided greater access to education for people in the workplace and given acknowledgment to learning outside of formal settings.

Some of the trends of participation conveyed in this chapter parallel international developments. The dictum “those who have, get more” is quite applicable to educational opportunity. As education has become much more diverse in New Zealand, reflecting its increasingly multicultural nature, access and opportunity are still differentially distributed. Once we can see participation statistics that reveal that the participation levels of specific subgroups mirror their proportions in the wider society, then considerable progress will have been made. But this is a long way off yet. In addition, it is not sufficient to focus only on degrees of participation; it is also necessary to analyze further participation in different forms of education and who controls the pedagogical contexts. Who defines what counts as knowledge and who controls its distribution? What is the impact of participation in adult education for individuals and the collective? Are life chances really

altered? These kinds of questions frequently asked by sociologists of education need more attention (Young, 1971).

When the initiatives of some tertiary institutions are examined, then greater hope for social equity is discernible. As I have illustrated in the case of lower level certificate programs conducted by the School of Education at AUT, the provision of bridging courses can act as a realistic vehicle for many mature-aged students to enter tertiary education, especially the Pasifika and Maori. Moreover, innovative programs such as in family literacy can allow previously disenfranchised adults not only to learn for themselves but also to model appropriate behavior for their children in a supportive environment. In this way the legacy of historical marginalization may be challenged and adult education may yet have a greater emancipatory project ahead of it.

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Chapter 14

THE UNITED STATES' "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT" AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Mejai B. M. Avoseh

1. INTRODUCTION

The history and politics of education in the United States point to education as a pillar in the founding of a democratic society and culture. The power of education was so potent that not every member of society could be entrusted with it. The struggle for power and social recognition thus was a determining factor well before the advent of contemporary US education. The desire for power and cultural dominance that defined education in the early years of the United States has continued to orient almost every educational policy and decision in the country. Although the issue bears on American education in general, the focus in this chapter is on K-12 education, the zone in American education that offers the widest access to the largest number of people possible. K-12 education has received increasing attention in recent years and has been the focus of much political debate. One of the results of this debate has been the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), a policy that implies widening access. This chapter digs into the Act's implications for widening access to education in the United States.

2. THE STRUGGLE FOR ACCESS

The struggle for power and access in American education dates back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when different and competing peoples and cultures began exploring the land. In those early stages of American history, education became a reference point in the struggle for cultural relevance and domination. In their colonizing exploits, the British had often used education to establish both cultural superiority and dominance. They introduced the same strategy in the American colonies, especially on the East

Coast, where the focus was on the establishment of a new society that sought improvement while simultaneously intending to preserve the best in its heritage. There was thus much concern with schooling and literacy. The big question, however, was the extent to which the desire for education “redressed inequities or enhanced opportunities” (Stubblefield and Keane, 1989: 27).

By the eighteenth century colonialism had taken root in North America. A hallmark of colonial establishment was its entrenched hierarchy, which placed (white) men over women, and whites over all other racial groups. It was a patriarchal, white-dominated society in which education was used directly to buttress the social divide. Access to education was not automatic. Indeed, it was forbidden to educate slaves. Access to literacy and education was defined by wealth, race, gender, and social status. To ensure that access to quality education was not for just anyone, the colonists framed education in terms described by Brookfield (2003: 498) as “Eurocentric views of teaching and learning processes.” Consequently, the only education worthy of its name was the one acquired in Europe. Thus, according to Lauter (1998: 517), “Education was for the propertied elite. Indeed the wealthiest families . . . sent their children to Europe . . . for college.”

Although public schools were established more frequently in the period under review, the quality of the education offered was limited to rudimentary reading and excluded writing and intellectual rigor. White slave owners determined what degree of access (if any) that slaves would have. Education for a slave was merely for the purpose of being a better slave, so it was up to the owner whether a particular task required some rudimentary education to carry it out effectively. For most slaves this meant no access to education. Indeed, as Lauter notes, “most slaveholders . . . believed that literacy ill-suited a slave to accept his or her place and thus was detrimental to local security. As a result, many governments passed laws making it *illegal to teach slaves to read and write*” (Lauter, 1998: 517; emphasis added). Historians further affirm that access for free slaves was illusory because “most schools did not enroll black students” (p. 517). Even in situations where a few Native Americans were “selected for training,” access was limited by the “Christianizing attitudes” of the whites who ran the schools. The trend continued even long into the post-Civil War period where there was emphasis on widening access to educational opportunities for groups that have traditionally been locked out. Aronowitz (1997) argues that during this period, the drive for expanded access was countered by the erection of new barriers to access, most notable among them being test scores and grades. He points out that “even in the halcyon days of the 1960s and early 1970s, colleges and universities were open only to the deserving poor minorities, that is, those who made the grades and the test scores” (p. 196).

The foregoing sketch gives a glimpse of the genesis of the gate-keeping system in American education. At the receiving end were the minorities whose descendants are still “being left behind” in various ways and at different levels of American education and society. From the start, access to education was both political and ethical. Thus, in their struggle Civil Rights groups linked access with equity and sought to achieve distributive justice in this regard. And there have been monumental achievements as a result of that struggle, such as the United States Supreme Court’s 1954 ruling in favor of *Brown* over the Topeka Board of Education. But even after such decisions, American education continues to grapple with issues emanating from and revolving around access. Thus access has become, in almost all its ramifications, a recurrent and an almost intractable issue in American education. Most of the recent literature (e.g., Buschman and Warner, 2001; Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 2001; Merriam et al., 2001; Smith and Armstrong, 2001; Bailey and Karp, 2003; Olson, 2003; and Orfield and Lee, 2004) has focused primarily on access to higher and adult education, with some allusion to K-12, yet access or lack of it at the K-12 level is capable of derailing access at other levels of education if it is not well channeled. NCLB would seem to affirm (at least in semantic terms) that some children have long been left behind and it is now time to ensure that they are guaranteed access. We shall delve more into this later in the chapter. First, let us present a brief conceptual analysis of access.

2.1 Access and equity

Webster’s Dictionary of the American Language (1976) defines access as, among other things, “the right or opportunity to reach or use or visit; admittance.” The concept of access encapsulates a number of different concerns. Consequently, it has been broadly used to refer to rights, including the right of admission, the right of entry, and the right of usage. Within the specific context of education in the United States, the concept of access embodies both individual and group concerns that dovetail in some ways with equity and social justice. Our review of the history of access in US education painted a picture of denial of access that eventually improved to the point of being unequal access to education. This links the concept to equity. Equity is sufficiently flexible to fit into conservative, liberal, or even radical ideological frameworks. Khann (1984) argues that equity is primarily identified as an ethical and political concept, which is often equated with the concepts of justice, fairness, inclusiveness, and equality. The political dimension establishes a connection between equity and mass participation in the affairs of the state in keeping with the dictates of “the rules of natural justice” (Avoseh, 2000). Viewed as an ethical concept, “equity operates within the distributive realm . . . and it embraces the virtues of fairness,

compassionate consideration, empathy and fellow feelings” (Akinpelu, 1998: 10). Access and equity are also bound up with the concept of distributive justice, which has often been applied in the form of “affirmative action” or “reverse discrimination.” In their discussion of inclusion in American society, Lipsky and Gartner (1996: 763) contend that in the United States “equity in education” is employed in discussions of education of the poor, women, and racial and linguistic minorities.

Efforts to widen access in US education have mostly reflected the “equity” and “affirmative action” connotations of the concept. Nevertheless, there were still some strong defenders of the unequal access policy, in fact so much so that when some level of access was “granted” it came in the form of segregation, which amounted to limited access. The proponents of “separate but equal” had a huge victory in the US Supreme Court’s 1896 ruling on *Plessy v. Ferguson*, maintaining that separate but equal facilities in public establishments (schools, etc.) were constitutional. The Civil Rights movements and their struggle for political, social, and economic rights were heavily colored in the quest for access. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the celebrated case against segregation, was in essence a fight against unequal access as outlined by the protagonists of segregation. In the landmark ruling in 1954 the US Supreme Court sided with desegregation in schools. According to Chief Justice Warren (1954), “we conclude that the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” The struggles for gender equality and minority and immigrant rights are all linked to the initial history of limited access in colonial and even in post-Civil War American education. In recent years certain criteria have been used to define access and/or the denial of access. But 50 years after Brown’s historic victory over the Topeka Board of Education, the roots of the problem that Brown challenged may have been shaken but not pulled up. The problem of widening access in the US educational system has seemed intractable due to the enormity of the situation on the one hand and the seemingly endless ideological battles between different political camps and vociferous public and special interest groups on the other. Consequently, defining access within the context of American education has become a problem in itself; questions are constantly being raised as to what access means, especially in the United States.

In a report from 1998 entitled *Reconceptualizing Access in Postsecondary Education*, the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) called for the following (NPEC, 1998: i):

1. Establish a consensus and clarify access and policy linkages with particular emphasis on broadening access definitions to include retention, satisfaction, and goal attainment.
2. Recommend new data collection efforts or analytical studies or changes to current efforts that reflect a broader view of access.

The NPEC report further identified certain barriers to access that education policies must take into consideration if they intend to make access a fruitful process, specifically: *financial, academic, race and gender, choice, motivation, and technology barriers to access*. The report judged that “current enrollment-based definitions of access are inadequate as a policy tool unless coupled with subsequent results-based outcomes—such as high student achievement and personal goal attainment” (p. 8). The complexity of the concept of access and its effects on education policies in the United States can hardly be overemphasized. Thus, it is typical in the United States that any education policy is subjected to the tenacity of the access debate. NCLB is one such policy whose very name implies access. Since its enactment in 2002, it has generated—and is still generating—debates from across the political and ideological spectrum. One significant and common issue in the debates is how much the Act is truly able to widen access. Before taking up NCLB in detail, we shall consider its antecedents, since there were previous attempts at reform that also targeted the problem of access in K-12 education.

3. HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

The founding fathers of America identified and used education as the foundation for a true and an enduring democratic culture. Consequently, the early leaders established education as the means for training Americans. Baker (1987: 228) contends that long before the revolution Benjamin Franklin and James Otis had “cited schooling as the taproot of public culture.” Thus, “the nation’s early leaders linked formal schooling and political culture, and the schoolroom became the essential mechanism for training Americans” (p. 228). It was believed in those formative years that education should foster the central tenets of democracy, namely equality and participation, and that government should be fully involved in education. Consequently, “by 1820, presidential comments on education had become a staple both in inaugural addresses and in annual messages to Congress” (p. 231). Since then education has been a priority item in political platforms, especially in the years stretching from America’s victory in the Cold War in the late 1980s up to the 2000 presidential election. In 2001 the United States Commission on National Security summed up the importance of education this way: “The capacity of America’s educational system to create a 21st century workforce second to none in the world is a national security issue of the first order” (The Teaching Commission, 2004: 20). So significant is education that it has become a major focus of the government. Over the years the federal government has approached

reform in education from different perspectives. However, all the reform efforts have centered on providing some form of access so as to redress past denials of access.

The most outstanding educational reform before NCLB was the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was specific in its direction and its means. It was intended to widen access by attacking a perceived socioeconomic barrier to access in K-12 education. Thus, President Lyndon B. Johnson's way of widening access to K-12 education was to offer direct financial assistance to children whose access to education was limited by poverty. The ESEA was an essential ingredient in what he called "the war on poverty." The overall objective was to close the achievement gap between privileged and underprivileged children through compensatory and achievement-driven educational programs. The Act was very clear in its focus on attacking the financial barrier to access (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965, Sec. 201):

Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance . . . to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means . . . which contribute to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children.

This Title 1 federal aid program for disadvantaged children was a mix of a genuine effort to widen access and a political strategy aimed at placating the civil rights groups. Be that as it may, the ESEA was, as of its enactment, the most significant attempt of the twentieth century to provide widened access to all American schoolchildren. President Johnson declared that the ESEA "will offer new hopes to tens of thousands of youngsters who need attention before they ever enroll in the first grade;" furthermore, "five million children of poor families [will] overcome their greatest barrier to progress: poverty" (Johnson, 1966 cited in Schugurensky, 2003).

Johnson's ESEA underwent some refinement, which eventually led to the 1968 Bilingual Education Act. However, the most far-reaching transformation of the ESEA was its reauthorization by the Clinton administration in 1994. The administration sought thereby to incorporate the central elements of the ESEA into its Goals 2000, which included the Educate America Act, the Improving America's Schools Act, and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. The reauthorization of the ESEA required states to develop standards and ensure that student assessment accorded with the standards. Both the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and the Improving America's Schools Act were part of the federal government's attempt to help to put children in a position to meet the higher standards set by the states. All in all, the focus was on widening the opportunity to attain

an education by removing as many barriers to access as possible and by providing support especially to children whose socioeconomic and (possibly) racial and linguistic identities put them outside the main arena. The importance of education, especially its reform, has gone hand-in-hand with controversy regarding ideological and political stereotypes. Each administration strives to put its political and ideological stamp on a prevailing policy. Such has been the case regarding education policies, especially those that relate to widening access. It was against this backdrop that NCLB, one of the most topical education policies in recent times, was enacted in 2001. To some Americans NCLB appears to be yet another attempt to modify the ESEA to ensure that it wears the face and ideological footprint of the Bush administration.

4. THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

The United States Congress passed the NCLB Act in 2001 as a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and it has since become the focal point of education policy. Among other things, the Department of Education describes NCLB as “a landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of American schools.” The Department projects the law as a kind of revolutionary change of federal efforts to support K-12 education in the country. The Department further states that the Act was built on four “common-sense” pillars: *accountability for results, an emphasis on what works based on scientific research, expanded parental options, and expanded local control and flexibility.*

According to President George W. Bush (2004), “these reforms express my deep belief in our public schools and their mission to build the mind and character of every child, from every background, in every part of America.” President Bush further describes the law as the “cornerstone of my administration.” And that “too many of our neediest children are being left behind.” Thus, it is clear from the President’s perspective that the essence of NCLB is to widen access especially for those who have been ostracized by virtue of their socioeconomic status or race. Based on the aforementioned “common-sense” parameters, NCLB is the federal government’s way of putting more teeth into its commitment to open up access to standard-based education for all American children and to close the achievement gap between White and African-American children. The thrust of the Act is to weave access around standards and accountability, around which all its provisions as regards states, districts, parents, students, and teachers revolve. Let us briefly outline some provisions of the law, especially those relating to students, standards and accountability, and funding.

4.1 Students

The Act's provision entitled "Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged" aims "to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments." Section 1001 of NCLB details 12 items under the statement of purpose. Here we cite items 2, 3, 8, and 9 of this Section:

- (2) meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools, limited English proficiency children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and children in need of reading assistance;
- (3) closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers;
- (8) providing children an enriched and accelerated educational program, including the use of schoolwide programs or additional services that increase the amount and quality of instructional time;
- (9) promoting schoolwide reform and ensuring the access of children to effective, scientifically based instructional strategies and challenging academic content.

The Act aims to provide access to homeless children with its Homeless Education provision. Section 721 of the Education for Homeless Children and Youths expresses the policy of Congress with the following items:

- (1) Each State educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public pre-school education, as provided to other children and youths.

Item 2 of this section goes on to advise states that have compulsory residency laws and similar requirements and regulations that may act as barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children "to review and undertake steps to revise such laws . . . to ensure that homeless children and youths are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths."

Finally, item 4 of this section states that:

- (4) Homeless children and youths should have access to the education and other services that such children and youths need to ensure that such children and youths have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

NCLB also stipulates the provision of access for migratory children through “high-quality and comprehensive educational programs” that will “reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves” and ensure that children who move among states are not “penalized in any manner.” Finally, Section 1301, Item 5 specifies that states should:

- (5) design programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of such children to do well in school, and to prepare such children to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or employment.

Besides homeless and migratory children, there are millions of children and youth who are at risk, neglected, or delinquent. Some have “graduated” from correctional facilities. This category of American children is denied access not only to education but also to most social facilities. Congress in its wisdom ensured that a provision of NCLB addresses “Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk.” In Section 1401, Item 3, the Act stipulates, for instance:

- (3) to prevent at-risk youth from dropping out of school, and to provide dropouts, and children and youth returning from correctional facilities or institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth, with a support system to ensure their continued education.

In addition to provisions that ensure access to all, NCLB also highlights issues relating to attrition and security. The Dropout Prevention Act (Sec. 1803, Item 2), for instance, seeks to prevent dropout and to provide reentry by ensuring that:

- (2) all students have substantial and ongoing opportunities to attain their highest academic potential through schoolwide programs proven effective in school dropout prevention and reentry.

Twenty-first-century American schools must not only be accessible but also safe. Thus, Section 4002 calls for support for:

programs that prevent violence in and around schools; that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; that involve parents and communities . . . to foster a safe and drug-free learning environment that support student academic achievement . . .

These provisions of NCLB indicate the unambiguous commitment to the education for all categories of disadvantaged children—the poor, homeless, migratory, and delinquent youth—whose access to quality education and achievement levels have been much less than those of the majority of children. The inclusion of retention, safety, and drug-free provisions also makes NCLB a truly children-centered educational reform.

More often than not, disadvantaged and low-performing children are those whose parents were themselves denied access to education on the basis of their race. It is also true that the chief indicators of low-achievement—being disadvantaged, homeless, and poor—are all evidenced in the African-American population. Race is thus the key factor. It is “a central form of difference” in American education. “Race as a set of attitudes, values, lived experiences and affective identifications, has become a defining feature of American life” (Giroux, 1997: 296). It is a matter of fact that advantage or disadvantage in the United States is not color-blind. Most of the disadvantaged and low-performing children are African-Americans. NCLB, as a student-based reform, can therefore be said to be a major attempt to widen access to education for African-Americans and people of color at the K-12 levels. The federal government’s commitment to this task is to adopt standards, assessment and accountability, and funding as a way of widening access for those who have been victims of a gate-keeping educational system.

4.2 Standards and accountability

NCLB is a standard-based reform that maintains a general accountability framework incorporating assessment, school improvement, and adequate yearly progress (AYP). The core of the accountability provision seems to be the AYP. The AYP requires states and other local education agencies (LEAs) to show evidence, through annual assessment of all children in Grades 3–8, that each individual school is making “adequate yearly progress.” The AYP requires that a minimally acceptable rate of progress be specified to “ensure that all groups of students, including those disaggregated by poverty, race and ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency data, reach proficiency in reading and math within 12 years” (NCLB, 2003). Although the states determine the standards by which AYP is measured, NCLB insists that it must be “statistically valid and reliable, and measure progress based primarily on the State’s academic assessment” (DOE, 2002: 2771). Furthermore, it must include separate annual measurable objectives for continuous and substantial improvement for all students.

To further ensure a close monitoring of standards, NCLB requires LEAs to permit students in schools that flunk the state AYP requirements for two straight years to transfer to a better public school. If schools continue to fail to meet the AYP, then students will be entitled to use Title I funds to seek extra educational services from public or private providers as parents deem fit, and the school must follow certain prescribed remediation. If all redemptive efforts fail, then the school will be subject to “a State takeover or placement under a private management” (DOE, 2002: 2771). With these provisions, NCLB hopes to open up access, ensure standards, and close the

achievement gap. The following items from Section 1001 sum up the standards and accountability provisions:

- (1) Ensuring that high-quality academic assessments, accountability systems, teacher preparation and training, curriculum, and instructional materials are aligned with challenging State academic standards so that students, teachers, parents, and administrators can measure progress against common expectations for student academic achievement.
- (2) Holding schools, LEAs, and States accountable for improving the academic achievement of all students, and identifying and turning around low-performing schools that have failed to provide a high-quality education to their students, while providing alternatives to students in such schools to enable the students to receive a high-quality education.

It is hoped that through these provisions high standards will be ensured and that the achievement gap between minorities and the advantaged groups will be closed. The implication of this is that NCLB relies on state policies and educational machinery for its implementation. The level of proficiency, the standards, and the tests to measure outcome of quality instruction all depend on the states. But NCLB is clear about the standards it expects and the level and quality of accountability from all involved in the reform process. Indeed, NCLB expects states' high standards to be a yardstick for all stakeholders in K-12 education to balance expectations with outcome. The provisions on schools in need of improvement or subject to corrective action, parent engagement, state and district report cards, and "highly qualified" teachers and paraprofessionals are all checks and balances built into NCLB so as to ensure that standards are not compromised.

A hallmark of the accountability provision is the unique effort to empower parents to be fully involved in their children's education. Parents will know how well schools are performing, they will be involved in the planning and reviewing of programs, and be provided with options and resources for seeking help for their children outside a failing school. Section 1001, Item 12, sums parental involvement thus: "affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children."

One more significant quality assurance aspect that aligns with standards and accountability is Title II, "Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals." This title requires that states develop plans to achieve the goal that all teachers of core subjects be highly qualified by the end of the 2005–2006 school year. Consequently, grants will be provided in order to: "increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly

qualified principals and assistant principals in schools” (Sec. 2101). To encourage states and other agencies involved in the execution of NCLB, each section of the law spells out its authorization of allocation, which details the amount of money authorized to be appropriated. For the fiscal year 2002, “Education of Migratory Children” was allocated the sum of US\$410,000,000 (Sec. 1002c). NCLB authorized an appropriation of US\$50,000,000 to “Programs for Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk” for the 2002 fiscal year. According to NCLB, Section 1002, the Local Educational Agency Grants authorized the following amounts to be appropriated:

1. \$13,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2002;
2. \$16,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2003;
3. \$18,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2004;
4. \$20,500,000,000 for fiscal year 2005;
5. \$22,750,000,000 for fiscal year 2006; and
6. \$25,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2007.

All these allocations are part of the federal government’s direct involvement in helping states and other agencies to meet NCLB standards set for their students. One significant dimension that NCLB adds to the federal funding formula is the two-tier funding provision that targets *high poverty districts* and the *education finance incentive*. The former provides extra funding to LEAs based on the number of poor school-age children in their respective areas. Thus, the poorer the area, the more funding it will receive from the Title I appropriation. About US\$1 billion was appropriated for this program for the 2002 fiscal year. On the other hand, the education finance incentive grants encourage an equity-based spread of funds across districts within the high poverty bracket. NCLB appropriated approximately US\$800 million to fund this program for the 2002 fiscal year.

To fulfill the mandate of providing access to all American children, especially in K-12 education, NCLB details every aspect of expectations, support, and consequences. There can be no doubt that the NCLB is informed by a deep-rooted concern and effort to reform education such that there is a significant rollback of past denials and obstacles. The extent to which NCLB can or cannot achieve or has or has not achieved these objectives is open to interpretation. As is often the case in any democracy, such interpretations may be colored by ideological or political leanings. Indeed, they may be akin to proverbial blind men touching different parts of an elephant and describing what an elephant is. In the end each description depended on the part touched—none described the whole, but together they made steps towards characterizing the whole. Nevertheless, there are aspects of NCLB that are open to universal evaluation outside politico-ideological frameworks.

5. LANGUAGES OF CRITIQUE

Any educational reform, especially in a heated political environment, is bound to be open to levels of interpretation. Such has been the case with NCLB. Supporters and critics of it have advanced arguments and continue to argue their views for and against the law. Each side has employed a language of critique that favors its side of the issue. All the major stakeholders in American education have continued to voice their support and criticism of the law, some of which we shall survey here.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) describes NCLB as a “challenge and an opportunity.” The AFT’s position has been articulated on different fronts. The association’s President, Sandra Feldman, presented its position at the 2003 AFT QuEST educational issues conference. The AFT aligns itself with the provisions of the law that require states to provide each classroom with a highly qualified teacher. The union is pleased with this provision because it saves quality control from the manipulation it has been subjected to by states and school districts in the past. Furthermore, the AFT agrees with the idea that the law compels states to ensure that “real standards are developed for the skills and knowledge that qualified teachers should have, as well as a system for seeing whether these standards have been met” (Feldman, 2003: 4). However, the association criticizes the accountability provision of NCLB, especially “adequate yearly progress.” The AFT contends that the AYP formula, among other things, is “statistically stacked against diverse schools; it also calls on most high-poverty schools—with their well-documented lack of resources—to achieve a rate of academic progress that has never before been seen—not in our most advantaged schools and not even in so-called world-class school systems” (p. 5). This leads the union to conclude that the accountability provision as it relates to the AYP is asking for the impossible. Feldman concludes that “accountability for that which is humanly impossible, laudable as it sounds, is unacceptable” (p. 5).

The National PTA (2003) affirmed its support for NCLB, especially its accountability and the drive to improve student achievement. The Parent–Teacher Association supports the increased involvement of parents and the targeting of resources to students and schools that are most in need. Nevertheless, the National PTA takes exception to the fact that “the law relies too heavily on testing as the primary measure of accountability, without looking at other important indicators that help to assess school performance, such as equity of resources, physical infrastructure, class size, instructional methods and parent involvement.” The National PTA also opposes “the expansion of state and local block grant and transferability provisions,” which it contends “could adversely impact accountability and program quality,” as well as “the consolidation of the class-size reduction program in the teacher-quality title.”

Kennedy Shriver (2003) examined NCLB as it relates to children with special needs. She commends the law's provisions that cover students with disabilities and its requirement of qualified teachers for each child, statewide assessment, and AYP. However, she feels that the law has not translated and may not translate to better educational services for students with disabilities. She contends that the dearth of qualified teachers has disabled NCLB as far as special education is concerned. The idea of filling special education positions with "quacks" does more damage and disservice to students with disabilities.

In a similar vein, Day-Vines and Patton (2003) put forward strategies to make NCLB culturally responsive. For them, NCLB needs more cultural sensitivity if it is to help to bridge the achievement divide. They argue that the recognition and possible elimination of biases, attitudes, and assumptions about culturally diverse children is a key to "deliver culturally responsive teaching and related services." Likewise, they emphasize that language, values, code switching, and community partnerships are cultural imperatives if NCLB is to succeed. Although the authors did not evaluate NCLB, they seem to suggest that the law did not adequately consider cultural diversity and its importance to educational reform.

As mentioned above, there are as many reactions to NCLB as there are political, ideological, and special interest groups in the United States. All in all there are at least two common threads that run through the debate about the law. First, there is evidence of an active public that seeks to make itself heard concerning and thereby influence changes in education. Dewey (1990) had argued that for democracy to thrive it must be supported by an educational system in which society is actively involved in changes that occur. According to him, "whenever we have in mind the discussion of a new movement in education, it is especially necessary to take the broader or social view." In doing so, education will "appear as part of the whole social evolution" (p. 296). Another striking common thread is the unanimity of the criticism of NCLB's accountability provision. President George W. Bush (2004) sought to respond to such criticism when he averred: "We're requiring higher standards. We are regularly testing each child on the fundamentals. But the status quo always has defenders. Some want to undermine NCLB by weakening standards and accountability."

The interplay of politics and power is quite evident in this debate. In the domain of power and politics, what Senge et al. (2000) terms "mental models" are almost imperatives. Of course, the debate on NCLB has been marked by political mental models. But this is not unusual, since education has always provided a fertile ground for politicians to struggle for power. Giroux (1985: xiii) argued that "education is that terrain where power and politics are given a fundamental expression." Nevertheless, education remains a catalyst for change. "As a referent for change, education represents

a form of action that emerges from a joining of languages of critique and possibility” (p. xiii). Despite the possibility of biases in the criticism of NCLB, the intent to protect society’s overall interest in education is evident. It may be true that the Republicans have hidden their agenda behind NCLB and that the Democrats are merely disgruntled politicians, but this does not negate the fact that the law attempts to make a giant stride in providing access to education for all American children. Whether the attempt translates to access that leads to positive outcome is a different matter.

6. BETWEEN EQUITY OF ACCESS AND EQUITY OF OUTCOME

“Equity” in education, and especially in the United States, is used along racial and linguistic lines. NCLB stipulates that states and other LEAs disaggregate figures for students from major ethnic and racial groups. Prominent among racial groups are African-Americans. History points to both deliberate and unintended efforts to deny this group access to education and other social benefits. The Department of Education admits that “even though schools are now desegregated, *public education has failed to deliver the promise of a quality education for African Americans*” (DOE no date; emphasis added). The Department proceeds to proffer a solution in terms of attacking “the soft bigotry of low expectations and demand that schools close the achievement gap between African-American and White students.” NCLB efforts aimed at addressing the achievement gap and to ensure every child is given access are framed in general principles whose application is rather technical. In addition to being technical there is an overreliance on states for achieving the objectives of the Act. And because some of the requirements of the law appear rather unreasonable and too difficult to achieve, some states are apt to work to the answer. The scramble by states and other LEAs to meet the requirements is most likely to be technical, too. Worse still, there is an inbuilt disaster in the overreliance on testing and test scores as the basis for evaluation. The heavy slant towards testing and test scores reduces the task of providing access and closing the achievement gap to a matter of numbers and statistics. Since the standards to be met are relative to the states, statistical manipulations can be used to pump up scores and achievement. This will help to “meet” the testing, standard and accountability requirements and at the same time circumvent the federal law. In any case the minority students will settle in an illusionary world of “academic achievements.” Thus, children may not be left behind and they may make “progress” statistically, but they may in reality be worse than being left behind. If in meeting federal requirements states decide to water down their requirements such that 35% statistically becomes the same

thing as 85%, then no gap can be closed. Indeed, the tendency is for the gap to widen. The possibility of this is especially high given the fact that most states do not have the capacity to carry out the duties required by NCLB.

According to a study by the Center on Education Policy (CEP), some people “felt that any increases in student achievement would be ‘*temporary*’ or ‘*only on paper*’” and others were concerned that “the Act could hamper student achievement” (CEP, 2004: vi). Another weak point is the lack of funding. Fiscal problems hamper the ability to achieve set objectives especially in rural areas. Tomkins (2003) contends that federal funding is “woefully inadequate” and regards NCLB as a blanket Act that “will undoubtedly leave many rural children behind.”

Aside from the overreliance on testing, poor funding, and unrealistic requirements, NCLB has failed to provide real access to minority students. Our earlier suggestion that the indices of poverty, low-achievement, lack of access to social-benefits, and stereotypes all coincide in the average African-American community buttresses the claim that students in these areas have only “qualified” access. A fundamental determinant of boosting student achievement is access to well-qualified teachers. However, Olson (2003) found that “students in high-poverty, high-minority, and low-performing schools have come up on the short end of the stick” in this regard. She also discovered that “most state efforts to recruit and retain teachers are not targeted at high-poverty, high-minority, or low-achieving schools.” The lack of access to well-qualified teachers is coupled with high-staff attrition in high-minority and low-performing districts. Closely linked with this is a lack of access to safe environments, a lack of access to the means to break loose from poverty, and stereotypes that are the lot of minorities. It may be true that NCLB has generated greater focus on the need to widen access to education for minorities, especially African-Americans. It may also be true that the law has helped to refocus America’s attention on the achievement gap and other race-related issues in education. What NCLB has not done, however, is to address the sociopolitical roots of the lack of access that have remained for African-Americans the antithesis of “liberty and justice for all.” The gap between equity of access and equity of outcome exposes the myth of widening access by leaving no child behind.

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Chapter 15

TOWARDS COMPARATIVE EQUALITY BUT PERSISTING INEQUALITY IN RELATION TO THE AMBITIONS OF SWEDISH EDUCATION

Holger Daun and Henrik Hansson

1. INTRODUCTION

Internationally and comparatively, Swedish education is strongly egalitarian; it has achieved more than most other countries regarding educational equality. On the other hand, in relation to Sweden's ambitious goals for education at all levels from preschool institutions to higher education, there are substantial gaps, a fact that has caused much debate in the country.

During the first four decades after World War II, Sweden was renowned for its extensive welfare system and its education policies, which gave priority to equality. The basic principle of the Swedish educational system is that "everybody should have access to an equivalent education, regardless of their sex, ethnic or social background, or place of residence" (SMES, 1997: 7), in other words, all students should be provided with an education of similar quality, regardless of their background (Lpo, 1994: 6).

Stratification and inequality exist in every society (Jencks et al., 1972; Farrell, 1999), and Sweden is no exception. Likewise, equality is a relative matter. In high-income countries practically every child has access to basic education and survives at this stage of the educational system, but gradually students acquire different levels of knowledge, which leads to unequal access to upper secondary and higher education. Available indicators (tests, grade point averages, etc.) make evident that a differentiation sets in already in comprehensive school and increases through the different levels of education.

2. SWEDEN: THE COUNTRY

Regarding its welfare system, economic policy, and educational profile, Sweden still differed from most of other OECD countries at the end of the 1990s (OECD, 1999; World Bank, 1999). Equality (between socioeconomic

classes, sexes, and so on) has traditionally had priority in Swedish society. Indications of this may be found in the Human Development Report (see, e.g., UNDP, 2000), where Sweden always has ranked high on equality issues.

Education in Sweden should be understood in the context of a broader area of policies: social, regionalization, and immigration policies. The *social policies* implemented after World War II may be regarded as active, collective, comprehensive policies insofar as they prioritized equality. The welfare system has not been limited to reacting to existing problems but has also been used as a preventive measure, covering most aspects of society and the individual's entire life span.

Regionalization policies were introduced to neutralize the negative geographical and social effects of economic growth and urbanization. Measures have been taken within the framework of these policies—for instance, subsidies to companies that establish themselves in rural or sparsely populated areas, and the decentralization of public authorities and administrative bodies from the capital, Stockholm, to other cities across the country. Municipalities (the smallest political and administrative units) differ in (i) economic situation, (ii) socioeconomic and ethnic composition, and (iii) population density and other demographic factors. Due to such differences, the state distributes additional subsidies in an attempt to equalize regional economic disparities. However, this is far from sufficient, and the municipalities continue to have different levels of spending available for education. The sector grant, which the municipalities receive, gives them a high degree of freedom in deciding how much of the state subsidies should be spent on education.

Despite extensive immigration during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s, Swedish culture is comparatively homogeneous. Approximately 12% of the population are immigrants or children of immigrants. An explicit *immigration policy* was formulated in the mid-1970s (Widgren, 1980). Immigrants should be integrated into economic and labor markets, but have freedom of choice as to culture, lifestyle, and language, without needing to violate their cultural and ethnic identity or cultural heritage, beliefs, and customs. Immigrant school children were also given the right to receive instruction in their mother tongue and Swedish as second language a few hours each week if they so wished. This policy could be summarized in three key terms: “Equality, Freedom of Choice, and Co-operation” (Widgren, 1980). However, in March 2004 research made evident that participation in Swedish as a second language contributed more to self-segregation followed by inequality than to progress in student performance.

3. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

According to Eide (1992), educational systems and policies in the Nordic countries were, at least in the beginning of the 1990s, different from those in other European countries, since they were more oriented towards welfare,

equality, and an equivalent education. Actually, the differences between the schools regarding levels of academic achievement are smaller in at least Finland and Sweden than in countries in continental Europe (OECD, 1994, 1996; Skolverket, 2001).

The educational system was radically reformed in 1962, when the 9-year comprehensive school for everyone was implemented. National standardized tests were introduced throughout the system. Upper secondary education had different branches; some were theoretical and resulted in eligibility to pursue higher education, whereas others were practical/vocational. The initial comprehensive school curriculum was modified in 1969 and again in 1980. Since the implementation of the comprehensive school, efforts have been made to mix the classes optimally (in terms of socioeconomic and cultural background) in order to enhance and diversify the pupils' experiences and to train them to exercise tolerance and function democratically. The Swedish educational system as a whole is presented in Figure 15-1.

Since 1997 preschool arrangements have been under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education; preschool classes were introduced in 1998. The aim was to give all children the same preconditions for starting school when they were 7 years old. In autumn 2000, 76% of all children 1–5 years old were in some type of preschool arrangement (Skolverket, 2000c). Since the beginning of the 1970s, preschool institutions are required to have a pedagogical and equality supporting perspective.

In the 9-year school all students are guaranteed a certain number of teaching hours in each subject for the entirety of their 9 years of compulsory schooling; allocation of teaching hours to certain grades is up to individual schools or municipalities. There is also some room for “student options” (Skolverket, 2000a).

The National Parliament and the Government steer the school system with goals and guidelines. The Education Act provides a framework for all kinds of educational activity. Chapter 1, Section 2 of the Act, (SFS, 1994) states:

All children and young people shall, irrespective of gender, place of residence or their social or financial conditions, have equal access to education in the state school system for children and young people.... Educational activity should be devised in accordance with fundamental democratic values.... Those working in schools must pay special attention

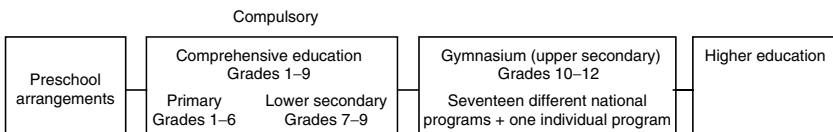


Figure 15-1. The Swedish educational system.

towards promoting equality between the sexes and actively opposing all forms of abusive behaviour, such as bullying and racism.

The municipalities have to guarantee that the national goals are being achieved, namely that a certain level of educational quality is maintained, that the principle of equivalent education is respected, and that all students acquire at least the minimal level of knowledge by earning passing grades in all of the eight core subjects. Quality should be seen holistically: at the various levels of education taken individually and together, students should be well prepared for all levels, and special attention should be given to children who need special support (Skolverket, 2000c,d).

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the Social Democratic government laid the groundwork for restructuring the educational system. However, it lost in the 1991 elections, and a coalition government consisting of conservative and center parties, among others, proposed policies of full choice, higher subsidies to private schools, and so on. When the government bill was presented, the Social Democrats argued: "The comprehensive school has been given the task to be one of the most important democratising and equalizing forces in society" (National Parliament, Motion, 1991/92: Ub62), but, they continued, the government's proposal gave priority to freedom of choice at the expense of the other educational goals expressed in the national curriculum.

Thus, the educational system was radically restructured in the beginning of the 1990s, the most important changes being: (i) decentralization, (ii) introduction of parental choice of school, (iii) stimulation of private education, (iv) new curricula, (v) a new grading system, (vi) a new type of national evaluation, and (vii) 6-year-old children were guaranteed a place in school. In practice, excellence in education thereby came to be a priority as much as equality (Daun, 2003). With the introduction of school choice, the policy of equivalent education and equality have been challenged in that students of Swedish/Nordic origin tended to leave schools with a large proportion of students of African, Asian, and Arabic descent. In some broad, national reports, it is argued that choice has not resulted in increased segregation (e.g., Skolverket, 1999), but other studies conducted at the municipality or district level indicate that there has been a considerable flow of pupils between schools in certain urban areas. This phenomenon has resulted in increased segregation and inequality (OECD, 1994; Skolverket, 1996a,b; Daun, 1998).

On the other hand, schools differ for reasons other than flows due to choice. A study of 19 school areas showed that 90% of the variation in the composition of the classes was explained by the socioeconomic and ethnic situations in the school districts. However, in the larger urban areas, school

choice affected class composition and the way classes were organized. Such schools are becoming more and more different from one another in the way they organize classes and teaching (Skolverket, 1996b).

The new national curriculum, which focuses on goal attainment but leaves room for local adoption and for some individual options for the pupils, was implemented in 1994 (Lpo, 1994; SFS, 1994). Pupils are required to earn at least a passing grade in each of the eight core subjects. In practice, automatic promotion is the rule since grades are not given until the pupil has reached form 8. All students have the right to achieve the learning objectives of the school system, and schools have a duty to make students aware of the fundamental values on which Swedish society is built: the sanctity of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, and the equal value of all (Skolverket, 2000a). In principle, full inclusion and positive discrimination are not only allowed but recommended in order to equalize the opportunities for students with learning disabilities (p. 14). Those children and youth who experience difficulties for various reasons have a right to receive the help and support they need; teaching must be adapted to suit the needs of each individual student (p. 25). Children with learning difficulties are taught in ordinary classes in ordinary schools. In some cases, they are taught in specific groups by special teachers during a certain number of hours per week. However, children with severe learning difficulties are placed in special schools (*särskolor*) (Skolverket, 1996a,b).

At the central state level Skolverket, the National Agency for Education, monitors the achievement of national goals, as stated in the latest curriculum, and assesses pupils' achievement in forms 5 and 9 by means of national tests. Academic performance has always varied in relation to students' socioeconomic and ethnic background, but less so than in most other countries (OECD, 1996).

Four indicators are normally used in assessing and monitoring educational quality and equality: (a) results on national tests, (b) grades given by teachers, (c) *meritvärde* ("merit value"), which is the average of the quantified indicators of the grades given, and (d) school variations in "merit values" which take pupil characteristics into account. National tests are conducted in forms 5 and 9 in Swedish language/Swedish as second language, English, and mathematics. Grades are given from the last semester of form 8, and they have four levels: "excellent," "passing with distinction," "passing," and "not passing." Teachers continuously evaluate student performance throughout their participation in the educational system, and they are obliged to arrange "progress talks" with all parents, at least once per academic year. "Merit values" consist of a formula based on quantified indicators of the grades earned. The database SALSA presents school and municipality averages in a form of tables of the value added by each school (SALSA, 2005).

The principal requirement for admission to secondary education is the attainment of at least “passed” in the subjects of Swedish language/Swedish as second language, English, and mathematics. Although most comprehensive school pupils continue in the 3-year upper secondary education, there are certain inequalities. Access to the 17 different national programs is based on the merit values acquired in form 9 in comprehensive school (which are related in turn to ethnic or socioeconomic background). Pupils who are unable to choose among these programs or who do not fulfill the said requirements have two other possibilities: a special program or an individual program (SFS, 1997: 1212).

Higher education was reformed in 1977 and 1993. On the first occasion, practically all postsecondary education was transformed into higher education. Sweden has some 40 higher education institutions, out of which more than 10 are universities and the remaining ones higher education colleges (*högskolor*) that offer such education. In the 1993 reform important aspects of decision-making, such as the use of financial resources, student admission, and the composition of various programs and courses, were decentralized and passed down to the individual departments and institutes (SMES, 1997). The universities can now decide how money should be allocated to their faculties and departments. The number of universities and higher education colleges has increased rapidly since the 1980s.

In principle, completion of any of the programs of secondary education makes a student eligible to pursue higher education, but due to a *numerus clausus* for all study programs and courses, only approximately 60% of the applicants are admitted. In 2001, for instance, the number of applicants was 100,000 but only 60,000 were admitted to higher education (Högskoleverket, 2003: 46–48). This is one reason why Sweden has among the lowest percentages of individuals enrolled in higher education among OECD countries, although higher education is free in Sweden and students can take out study loans. Within the country there are large geographical variations. Interest and merit values (from secondary education) determine whether students will continue in higher education and what disciplines they will study. Ultimately these features are conditioned by students’ socioeconomic, cultural, and other characteristics. On the other hand, a number of students are admitted on the basis of (a) a quota applying to individuals who are above 25 years of age and have some years of work experience and/or (b) results on a test (*Högskoleprovet*) that is given twice each year for entrance into higher education.

Sweden has a strong tradition of adult education provision. The following are some of the opportunities in adult education that exist: study circles (non-formal), folk high schools, basic schooling and upper secondary education for adults, and education and/or training (nonformal) organized by adult educational associations, county councils, and labor market organizations and companies. In 1997, approximately 5 million Swedes were above 18 years old,

and of these, 2.8 million were involved in study circles (SCB, 1997). Considering the fact that many participate in more than one study circle, we may still assume that at least one-third of the adult population are learning through study circles. For adult immigrants there is also instruction in the Swedish language.

4. EDUCATION AND EQUALITY

The definitions of equality and equity are not always evident in research studies and evaluations. Here we employ Farrell’s (1999: 158) definition, according to which equality

deals with the actual pattern in which something (e.g., income or years of schooling) is distributed in a particular group. The equality of income distribution can, for example, be assessed statistically by measuring deviations from some hypothetically completely equal situation.

In a comprehensive approach, equality in education includes access, opportunity/survival, output, and outcome. The first three mentioned are considered in this chapter, and in fact in relation to gender, socioeconomic status (SES), ethnic/linguistic background, geographical areas, and disability (see Table 15-1). Generally, children having one or more parents born abroad are defined as having an *utländsk background* (foreign background: FB).

The description below follows the scheme in Table 15-1 to the extent that data has been available. Information is incomplete when it comes to access, survival, and knowledge acquired in relation to socioeconomic status.

4.1 Gender equality

As in other parts of the world, girls perform better than boys in education up to the level of higher education and in some disciplines also at this

Table 15-1. Dimensions of equality in relation to access, opportunity/survival, and output.

Student characteristics and background	Access	Opportunity/survival in the system	Equivalent learning, level of knowledge acquired
Gender			
Socioeconomic status (SES)			
Ethnic, linguistic characteristics (FB)			
Geographical area			
Disability			

level. In form 9 in comprehensive school, the gender difference favors girls. Table 15-2 presents merit values in 2001 and 2002.

In the national tests in form 9 (comprehensive school) in 2002, between 56% and 63% of girls achieved the two highest levels on the three components of the Swedish language test, whereas between 33% and 43% of boys did so (Skolverket, 2002a,b,c: 14). In mathematics there were no gender differences, while in English girls performed considerably better than boys (p. 33).

In upper secondary education, students from the natural science program acquire the highest merit values and those in the industrial program the lowest, but there is also a significant gender gap in favor of the girls (Skolverket, 2003: 75–76). In 2001 there was a considerable gender difference in the percentage completing upper secondary education within 4 years: for male students it was 69% and for female students 76% (p. 77). A study of the students who completed upper secondary education in 1999 and had started in higher education within 3 years showed a considerable gender difference. The national average was 42.6%, but for female students it was 47.3% (Högskolverket, 2003).

In 2001–2002, 59% of all new students enrolled in higher education were women and the percentages were approximately the same among registered undergraduates and those completing an undergraduate degree, while women represented only 44% of those completing a doctoral degree (p. 56). Moreover, there are still major differences in the programs chosen by men and women (Högskolverket, 2002: 36).

From an international perspective, Swedish women participate more than most other European women; female enrollment in Sweden as compared to the European Union average shows the following: *a little below average*: social sciences, business, law; *a little above*: humanities and the arts, services; *far above*: sciences, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction, agriculture and veterinary science, and health and welfare (Eurydice, 2002: 16). It should be noted, however, that the overall female participation in some programs, for instance, in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering, is considerably lower than male participation. For all higher education, the participation rate of female in relation to male students was 123 in the European Union, and 140 in Sweden (p. 20).

Table 15-2. Merit values in relation to gender.

Year	Boys	Girls	% Eligible to upper secondary education
2001	191.8	214.8	87.4
2002	194	215.6	91

Source: Skolverket (2003).

4.2 Ethnic/linguistic background and equality

In the whole country, 125,000 students (10–12% of the students) in comprehensive school have a foreign background. In principle, native language instruction and Swedish as second language instruction are given as extracurricular activities in the schools in which the students are enrolled. Generally, only half of those eligible participate in home language teaching or Swedish as second language (Skolverket, 2003: 41). Throughout the period after the mid-1990s, students with foreign background have had significantly lower grades and merit values. For instance, in 2001 and 2002, the merit values were distributed in form 9 as shown in Table 15-3.

In 2001 nearly 90% of the students generally were eligible for entrance into secondary education, but among students with foreign background, only 78.4% were eligible (Skolverket, 2003: 47). Another measure is the percentage that completed the 3 years of upper secondary education within 4 years. Among all those starting in 1998, 73.6% did so, while only 58.7% of students with foreign background did so (p. 77). As mentioned above, 42.6% of all students having completed upper secondary in 1999 had started in higher education within 3 years, but for students with foreign background it was 39.6% (Högskolverket, 2003).

Individuals not admitted to higher education on the basis of their grades from upper secondary can take a special national test (*Högskoleprovet*), and if they perform well enough on this test, they can compete for a place in higher education. In 2003 a special study was conducted of the results of these test in relation to ethnic/linguistic background. It was shown that those with foreign background scored significantly lower than those of Swedish origin. The participants were divided into four categories—from being born in Sweden by Swedish-born parents to being born abroad by parents born abroad. The former group scored highest and the latter lowest on the tests. It is evident that Swedish language skills affect the test results (Reuterberg, 2003). Despite this, students with foreign background are represented in higher education almost to the same extent as in the population in general (Högskolverket, 2002: 21).

Table 15-3. Average merit values and eligibility to upper secondary education, nationally and among students with “foreign” background (FB).

Year	Merit values		% Eligible to upper secondary education	
	National average for non-FB	Students with FB	National average for non-FB	Students with FB
2001	202.9	185.7	89.2	78.4
2002	204.6	188	—	—

Source: Skolverket (2003: 46).

4.3 Socioeconomic status and equality

Performance has always varied in relation to students' socioeconomic status and ethnic background, but the variation due to differences in socioeconomic status are smaller in Sweden than the average for the OECD countries (Skolverket, 2001). Although the districts have been (and still are) rather segregated, the individual schools have been relatively heterogeneous and relatively diverse when compared to the situation in many other countries.

At the lowest levels in education, no inequalities are yet visible, since everybody has access and no grading takes place. Moreover, the general reports from *Skolverket*, or the National Agency for Education, do not include grades or merit values in relation to socioeconomic status of the students. However, there are two sources that deal with socioeconomic inequalities in comprehensive education and upper secondary education. The first involves the weighted results that take account of the socioeconomic, cultural, etc., background of the student body (per school, community, etc.), while the second consists of research conducted by academicians.

The level of knowledge correlates with home background, home support, parental educational background, and home language (Skolverket, 2000a: 165). In the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) study, the strongest relationships were found between test results, on the one hand, and family structure, socioeconomic status, and number of books at home, on the other (pp. 88 ff.). Students with a "whole" nuclear family (students living with both mother and father) achieved significantly better than students living with single parents. A large proportion of low achievers had no or very few books at home.

Access to higher education has improved somewhat in that the percentage of students from the working class increased during the 1990s, while the share of the working class in the population decreased somewhat. Among those beginning programs in higher education during the 2000–2001 academic year, 26% came from working class homes as compared to 20% 10 years earlier (Högskolverket, 2002: 20).

4.4 Geographical background and equality

Sweden is a large country with low population density. Approximately 25% of the population live in rural areas, and the education level compared to the rest of the country is lower. *Glesbygdsverket* (the Swedish National Rural Development Agency, 2005) addresses these issues, and their mission is stated on their homepage (Glesbygdsverket, 2005):

Rural areas make up more than half of Sweden. Distances from workplaces and various service outlets are long. Altogether the rural

population of Sweden numbers some one and a half million people: an average of three and a half inhabitants per square kilometre. Of these, nearly half live in particularly sparsely populated areas. They are the main concern and focus of *Glesbygdsverket*.

According to agency reports, the issue of access to education has many implications for people in rural areas because of distances to education providers (Glesbygdsverket, 2001, 2002). In Sweden a large number of regional universities have been created in order to reach people in rural areas and people with no family tradition of higher education. Also study/learning centers have been set up in most municipalities. These centers are learning-facilitating arenas—public spaces with information and communication technology (ICT) and supervisors making distance education available from universities and other education providers.

Generally, there are huge geographical differences in resources, cost per student, equipment of the schools, and individual options for the students. For instance, schools in sparsely populated areas have always had a larger number of teachers per 100 students. However, fewer resources do not automatically affect student performance; there are indications that in rural areas the good school climate and the relationships between the parents and schools more than compensate for the problems caused by limited resources (Skolverket, 1996c, 2000b). As far as merit values are concerned, there were large variations between the 287 municipalities; in 2002, the lowest average was 173.6 while the highest was 247.5 (Skolverket, 2003: 47).

Enrollment at levels 5–6 (postsecondary/preuniversity and higher education) according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) definition varies considerably within Sweden. It is highest in the western part of the country and lowest in the central areas of the southern part (Eurydice, 2002: 32). More than one-fifth of all individuals participating in any level or type of education are in higher education in the capital of Stockholm and the most northern region, but in two of the regions only 7–10% participate in higher education (p. 7). Among the municipalities, participation varied from 12% to 61% (Skolverket, 2003: 79). There are geographical variations in enrollment, participation in different types of education, and the completion of undergraduate degrees.

The geographical distance to schools and institutions of higher education affects motivation and willingness to pursue education. Studies have shown that the regional universities and the learning centers in fact recruit students in the local area with previously low educated people. Students at learning centers are predominately females (over 60%) and in general older than campus students.

In particular the learning centers are important for older learners who need to update or reeducate themselves in an ever-changing labor market. This category often has set down roots in the area. IT is believed to play a

major role in enabling education to all in Sweden—using learning centers and universities in a collaborative union.

4.5 Disabilities and equality

Access to education for students with disabilities is a priority in Sweden. A special agency is created for these issues, the National Agency for Special Educational Support (SISUS). The basic principle is stated and a short description is given of the agency's responsibility (SISUS, 1997):

People with disabilities should have the same opportunities as everyone else: Education and studies influence the whole way of life of everyone and play an important role in reducing social disparities and creating equal opportunities in society. The quality of one's education determines the choice of profession and work. Furthermore, an education nearly always leads to increased social and cultural activities. . . . People with disabilities are entitled to the same opportunities as everyone else. SISUS' task is to improve the possibilities for disabled young persons and adults to obtain a good education.

There is a small group of young people in Sweden who receive their upper secondary school education in specially adapted schools. Their disabilities are so severe that they require individually adapted teaching supported by coordinated arrangements for personal care to enable them to participate fully at school. Without this opportunity many severely disabled young pupils would not be able to receive an upper secondary school education on their own terms.

A study conducted by SISUS (1997) on access to higher education for disabled people showed that few disabled people continue their studies to higher education. Statistics are available only for the deaf/hearing impaired, the blind/visually impaired, and the physically impaired. The report notes that during the period 1993–1996 the percentage of impaired children in compulsory school is 0.67–0.71% of the total amount of children. In upper secondary school the percentage of disabled students is 0.60–0.65% and in higher education only 0.11–0.14% of the total number of students.¹ The blind and the deaf cannot pursue higher education without support,

¹There may be some flaws in these data since they have been collected in different ways at different school levels. At compulsory and upper secondary schools, the statistics are based on “needs of support” because of disability, i.e. external professional judgment, since health care and pedagogical personnel test and assess abilities, the individuals themselves do not apply or seek help. On the other hand, statistics for higher education are based on those who have applied for economic support for their disability.

whereas those with hearing impairments, for instance, might not apply for specific support at the university.

To sum up, all young disabled people in Sweden receive compulsory education, but fewer continue to upper secondary education and even fewer continue to higher education. Issues related to disability and access in society in general are dealt with by the Disability Ombudsman (Handikappombudsmannen, no date). According to new policies, the main responsibility this ombudsman now has is for access to higher education for disabled people. The mission, as stated in the Equal Treatment of Students at Universities Act (2001), is to make higher education, both entry and study, more accessible in all respects for people with disabilities.

Physical access for the disabled at different universities in Sweden has been examined, and it is particularly old universities, or old buildings, that require a number of modifications in order to facilitate attendance by the disabled.

When it comes to higher education, there is obviously more to be done in order to increase access and also to adapt the lectures and exams, etc., for the disabled. However, the disability movement—organized disabled people—has been powerful and its political will for improvement has contributed to a situation that, from an international perspective, is probably at the forefront.

5. DOES INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY INCREASE ACCESS?

The ICT infrastructure in Sweden is among the most developed in the world; most regions have high-speed Internet connections, all schools have computers and Internet access, and most (but not all students) have computers at home connected to the Internet.² There have been large investments in teacher training, computers, and Internet infrastructure in Swedish schools. Most notably, the National Action Program for ICT in Schools 1999–2002 (ITIS) provided over SEK 1 billion. In compulsory and upper secondary schools, everyone has access to ICT, but this is used only on rare occasions to reach students at a distance. Face-to-face education is the normal way to study at these educational levels. Computers and the Internet are, of course, used in the classroom. Although rare, a few schools at the upper secondary level use ICT as means of access to school—modern distance education.

²There is a digital divide even in Sweden, but this is not being discussed here, since access to education is the focus.

On the other hand, in higher and popular education (e.g., study circles, adult voluntary education) that target adults who might have problems attending classes, ICT is used more frequently and is encouraged by special government investments. The Swedish Netuniversity is in fact not a university but an agency that promotes distance education using ICT and a portal that coordinates Internet-based courses provided by 35 established universities and higher education colleges in Sweden. Currently, there are more than 2,500 courses available, and they are accessible via the Internet, which means it is possible for students to study from home. There is a parallel agency for popular education, Nationellt centrum för flexibelt lärande (the Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning), which states its mission as follows:

Flexible Learning. Our changing society makes increased demands in terms of skills development. Combining family, work and education is becoming all the more common and individuals' needs for flexible ways of studying are growing. Flexible learning involves a form of teaching where the student's own wishes and needs are paramount. Flexible learning gives students the opportunity to choose the time, place, pace and structure of their studies. Teaching is centred around the individual and the organisations change their teaching, course structure and techniques to meet the needs of their students.

All schools and universities use ICT, and there are more opportunities to combine work and studies using fewer face-to-face campus meetings and instead using distance technology, mainly e-mail correspondence and increasingly special Internet platforms and richer distance communication channels, such as audiovisual synchronous contact.

ICT used in education (education technology) is having and will continue to have a tremendous impact on access to education. Not only can individuals access almost all universities in Sweden via the Internet today, but access to education is also possible in a global context. This type of access to education gives rise to new issues, such as how to assess quality, how to identify the students, and how to adapt educational content to the medium.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Seen from a comparative and international perspective, Sweden ranks well in terms of educational equality, with one exception: children of immigrants are not able to keep step with children of Swedish-born parents. This occurs despite the existence of opportunities for children with mother tongues other than Swedish to be taught in their mother tongue and the existence of courses in Swedish as a second language.

Judging from the very ambitious policy for equality, Swedish education still needs to improve a great deal; there are considerable differences in student performance related to gender, socioeconomic, linguistic, and geographical background and disabilities. Also the attitudes towards education lead to segregation. Large-scale government programs aimed at creating greater equality in education will have little impact if there is not enough motivation within the target groups (Illeris, 2003).

What worries politicians and educationists regarding gender is the fact that male students perform significantly less well than female students, that fewer males participate in education, and that, despite these two features, gender inequalities in favor of the male population persist among academic staff, in the labor market, and in society at large.

It remains to be seen what role ICT can and will play in equalizing education in terms of access and opportunity. ICT also contributes to making Swedish education more international; students communicate and receive information in a “world classroom” today—the Internet.

The concept of equality and its promotion in higher education can no longer be taken for granted. National policies in Sweden have consistently promoted equality in education, but universities as institutions focus on excellence and attempt to recruit the best students (Hansson and Holmberg, 2003). The challenge of achieving a balance between equality and excellence in the Swedish educational system is considerable. Another problematic duality in Sweden is that Swedish universities need both to compete and to collaborate in order to get funding—the so-called *coopetition* requires careful strategies and is difficult to achieve effectively.

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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN CHINA

Qian Tang

1. INTRODUCTION

Since China reopened to the world after the end of the “cultural revolution” in the late 1970s and the profound structural reform of its economy, there has been considerable social and economic development. China has in large part replaced its centrally planned economic system with a market economy. Its gross domestic product (GDP) in 2003 reached US\$1.4 trillion, resulting for the first time ever in a per capita GDP in excess of US\$1,000. The population living in poverty has dropped from 250 million to 30 million. China has achieved its bold objective, set 25 years ago, of quadrupling its 1980 GDP in terms of constant prices by the end of the twentieth century and of raising the living standard of its people from simply having enough food and clothing to living a relatively comfortable life.

To achieve and sustain such development depends largely upon the intellectual and technical quality of the country’s human resources. Great efforts therefore have been made to reform and develop China’s educational system. The most recent data indicate that, by the end of 2002, the net enrollment rate in primary schools had reached 98.58% and the gender gap had been reduced to 0.09%. The 9-year compulsory education had been universalized in the areas where 90% of the population live, the highest rate among the nine high-population developing countries (Brazil, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Mexico, and Pakistan). By 2001 the illiteracy rate had been reduced to less than 6.72%, and the illiteracy rate among the age group 15–50 had declined to less than 5%. The total number of university students reached 16 million, with the net enrollment rate of 15% in 2002, the largest body of university students in one country in the world.

Despite the significant progress, China is facing three major challenges in educational access, two of which are long-standing and one is more recent, mainly as the result of uneven development between urban and rural regions and between eastern/coastal and inner/western regions.

Today 800 million Chinese out of the total population of more than 1.2 billion still live in rural areas. There is a large discrepancy between urban and rural areas in terms of education opportunities. Although the average duration of education received by people living in cities has reached more than 10 years, the average education for the rural population aged 15 and above is less than 7 years. Improving access to compulsory education in rural areas to stop producing new illiterates represents the number one challenge.

The second challenge is for literacy work. While, as the result of unremitting efforts in literacy work over the last 50 years, the illiteracy rate has dropped to 6.72%, there are still 85 million illiterate and semi-illiterate people in the country, most of whom live in rural areas (MOE, 2003a). Among them 20 million are young and middle-aged adults (aged 15–50), a situation that negatively affects the quality of the country's labor force. Moreover, there are more than 1 million new illiterates each year in rural areas due to dropping out of school. Further reducing the illiteracy rate will be much more difficult.

As a result of structural reforms of the economy, many farmers have migrated into urban areas and taken employment there. At present there are close to 100 million so-called “migrant rural workers” working in large and small cities (Xinhua News Agency, 2004a). A new phenomenon has appeared: of the approximately 20 million children of migrant rural workers living in cities who fall in the age group eligible to take part in the 9-year compulsory education, half do not enter school on time due to various difficulties. Furthermore, close to 2 million school-age children do not attend schools at all (Xinhua News Agency, 2004c). Providing education to children of migrant rural workers is a new challenge for the education authorities in urban areas.

These challenges not only have a bearing on social justice; addressing them is also essential for the country's socioeconomic development in general and for rural development in particular. In addition, these problems contribute to the gaps, which are growing ever larger, between urban and rural areas, as well as between coastal and inner/western regions. If such gaps are not narrowed to a reasonable and acceptable degree, the resultant social injustice and inequality will sooner or later give rise to instability in the society.

This chapter attempts to analyze the major causes of these problems and to describe the policy measures recently put in place by the Chinese education authorities in order to address them.

2. CHINESE CITIZENS' RIGHT TO EDUCATION

In China the right of citizens to education is guaranteed by law. Article 46 of the Constitution says, “Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the duty as well as the right to receive education” (Constitution of the

People's Republic of China, 1982). This right was further emphasized in the country's Education Law, Article 9 of which states, "Citizens, regardless of nationality, race, sex, occupation, property status and religious belief, enjoy equal educational opportunities" (Education Law of the People's Republic of China, 1995).

Furthermore, the country's Compulsory Education Law states that China shall provide 9-year compulsory education and that children aged 6, regardless of sex, nationality, or race, shall enter school and receive compulsory education. Also according to this law, parents or guardians who fail to send their children of compulsory education age to school, as well as enterprises or individuals that hire child laborers, will be punished. It also specified that compulsory education is composed of two phases (primary education and junior secondary education), that students receiving compulsory education should not pay any tuition fees, and that the state will provide financial assistance to students from poor families. However, in *Guidance on Implementation Details*, a document attached to this law, it is stated that students may be charged "incidental fees" to cover some costs of running schools (Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China, 1986).

China's Education Law reaffirmed that the state has a duty to provide 9-year compulsory education and that governments of various levels shall take all measures necessary to ensure the access of children of corresponding age groups to compulsory schooling. This law also states that all education receivers shall enjoy equal rights when enrolling in schools and entering the next level of schooling or employment. It emphasizes that females have rights equal to those of males regarding access to education (Education Law of the People's Republic of China, 1995).

China has long regarded education primarily as a means to ensure the availability of the human resources needed for economic development and poverty alleviation. In recent years, however, it has recognized that equal access to education, particularly to compulsory education, is a basic human right for each citizen, as well as a means for human development and for improving the quality of people's individual lives. Nevertheless, providing educational access to about 1.3 billion citizens, as guaranteed by law, is not an easy task.

3. NINE-YEAR COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS: FINANCIAL INPUT AS A KEY

Since the end of 1970s the enrollment of Chinese children in 9-year compulsory education has greatly increased. Official data for 2002 show that the net enrollment rate of primary and junior secondary schools had

reached 98.58% and 90%, respectively (MOE, 2004). China can therefore be considered a country that has achieved universal primary education, based on UNESCO's standard and definition, which states that a country has achieved universal primary education if net enrollment rates exceed 95% (UNESCO, 2002). The country's current target is to universalize 9-year compulsory education by 2010.

Although in theory all citizens have the right to receive compulsory education, there is considerable disparity between urban and rural regions. While in urban regions almost all youth have an opportunity to receive 12 years of primary and secondary education and in big cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, more than half of those aged 18–22 attend universities, there were still more than 500 counties (out of 2,861) that had not universalized 9-year compulsory education as of 2000. Most of these are located in the western China (MOE, 2003a). According to recent statistics from the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2004), in 2002 the rural primary school completion rate was 89%; this means that more than 1 million rural youth enter the world of work before completing primary schooling. Universal access to compulsory education in rural areas is still a promise on paper, particularly in western China.

A survey conducted by the State Bureau of Statistics revealed that in 2001 the total rural workforce was 482 million, 70% of the total labor force of the country. Among the rural workforce, 31% had completed primary school, 49% had received junior secondary school diplomas, 13% graduated from high school, and 7% were illiterate or semi-illiterate. The poor quality of rural labor has become a bottleneck for rural economic development. In recent years the Chinese media have carried many reports seeking to attract public attention to the status of the country's rural education. Some even used the word "crisis" to describe the seriousness of the situation since unequal access to education results in social injustice that further widens the gap between rich and poor, as well as between well-developed and underdeveloped regions.

There are many causes of these chronic and acute problems. For example, rural schools and urban schools use the same curriculum and teaching materials, and these are basically intended to prepare students for university entrance examinations. As only a small portion of rural secondary school graduates have a chance to enter universities, most rural students feel the knowledge they learn is not useful and therefore they lose interest in studying. The central cause, however, can be traced to the inadequate and insufficient financial input to education in rural areas. Lack of financial resources has resulted in many rural primary and secondary schools losing teachers, who have moved away to work in economically advanced regions and other sectors that pay better salaries. With the reduced number of qualified teachers, the quality of teaching in many rural schools has been

seriously damaged. Lack of financial resources also forces rural schools to generate income by all possible means. They charge “incidental fees” to cover operational costs. In economically underdeveloped regions, farmers with low incomes have difficulties paying even incidental fees for their children’s schooling, which results in increased dropout rates in those regions.

It should be noted that in China farmers’ incomes have increased at far slower rates than those of urban dwellers in recent years. The data show that from 1997 to 2003, the average annual increase of farmers’ incomes was only 4%, about half of those for urban dwellers. The income gap between farmers and urban dwellers is therefore increasing. In 1997 the ratio of average yearly income between a farmer and an urban dweller was 1:2.47. It increased to 1:3.24 in 2003 (Xinhua News Agency, 2004a). These figures alone make it clear why paying fees for compulsory education is a greater burden for farmers than for urban residents.

The inadequacy of financial allocation to rural education has been linked to the country’s inadequate financial input into education as a whole, which has long been a subject of debate among policy-makers and educators. China, as Chinese education authorities themselves acknowledge, is a typical case of “a poor country running a mega-education system.” While the total educational expenditure has increased each year since 1978, the percentage of GDP has remained between 2.0% and 2.6% until 2001 and 2002, when it reached 3.19% and 3.41%, respectively (see Figure 16-1). These figures are very low even in comparison with most other developing countries. In the mid-1990s, the central government set a goal of reaching 4% of GDP by the end of twentieth century, which it has yet to achieve.

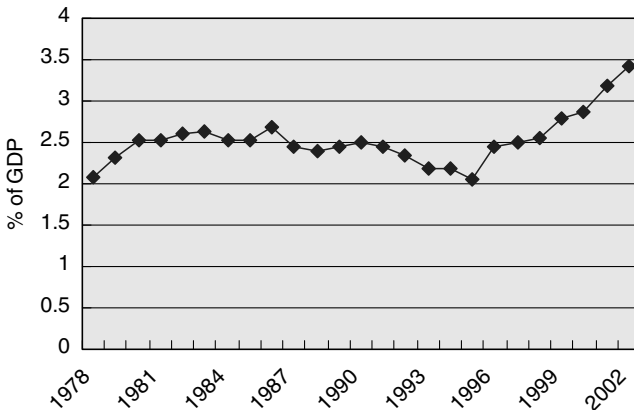


Figure 16-1. Public education expenditure as % of GDP.

However, rapid economic development has ensured that the absolute figures of the education budget significantly increased in the last quarter century and particularly in the last 10 years (Figure 16-2), though it is still far from sufficient.

The other issue for debate was the share allocated to compulsory education in the national education budget. In the late 1990s, the portion allocated to primary and junior secondary education was between 50% and 55%, while higher education received around 20%. The remaining 25–30% went to general and vocational education at senior secondary level (Zhang, 1998). While Chinese university students have to pay tuition and other fees, the share of public educational expenditure per student (8,631 yuan RMB) at this level was still almost 10 times that per pupil in primary school (873 yuan RMB) in 2002 (MOE, 2003b). Many educators and economists have argued that social justice demands that public resources for education favor compulsory education and that university students should pay more from their own pockets. Furthermore, within the national budgetary provision for compulsory education, there has been a disparity between per capita expenditure for urban and rural pupils. Available data show that the funds received for rural pupils have been much less than for their urban counterparts (MOE, 1998a).

A review of the history of changes in the mechanism of allocating financial resources for basic education in rural areas during the last 25 years

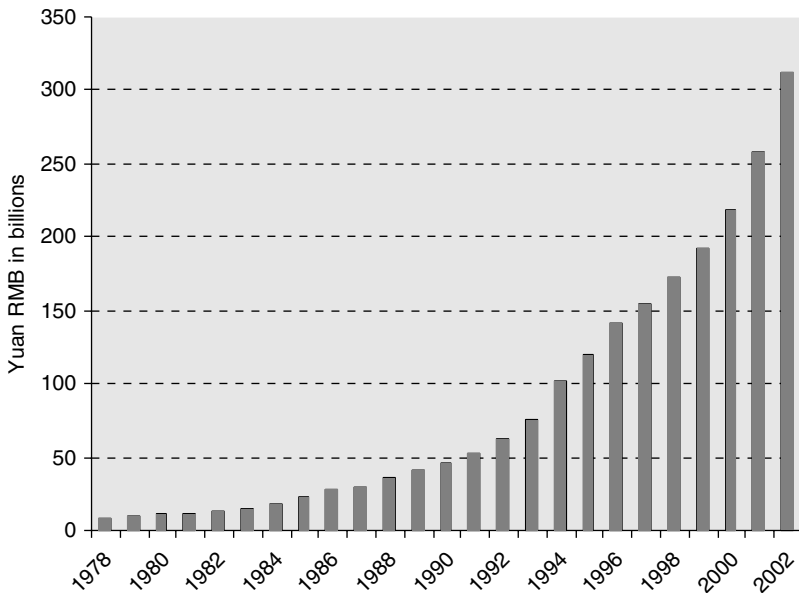


Figure 16-2. Public expenditure on education.

would help us understand why rural compulsory education has been underfunded. Until the early 1980s, basic education (including primary and secondary education) in China was managed in a rigid and highly centralized way that corresponded to the country's centrally planned economic system. Following the structural reforms of the economy, key among which was decentralization, the management structure of basic education was changed in 1985. A policy decision by the central government resulted in the "separate-level running of schools and separate-level management." In China there are five levels of authorities besides the central government: provincial (31 in total, not including Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan), prefectural (333), county (2,861), township (43,700), and village. The new system did not make much difference in cities. It had a large impact on education system in rural areas, however, making villages run primary schools and townships run junior secondary schools, while senior secondary schools were run by counties.

Such decentralized systems encouraged local authorities to take necessary initiatives and make decisions appropriate to local conditions. Responsibility for mobilizing financial resources was also primarily with these three bottom levels of authority. Local governments were then allowed to collect a new "education tax surcharge" to support basic education particularly in rural regions. This change corresponded to the trend of redistributing national revenue between central and local governments during the period, with the latter gaining a greater share. In this new system, the authorities at village and township levels had to collect various types of fees from farmers in order to maintain financial support for rural primary and secondary schools. A survey conducted in seven provinces in 1998 shows that for rural basic education, 1% of resources came from the central government, 11% from provincial governments, and 10% from county authorities. The remaining 78% was collected by township and village authorities directly from farmers (MOE, 1998b).

In fact the nature of this system was "rural education paid by farmers." The quantity of financial input to rural education depended on the wealth of local farmers. The new system was found to work well in the rural regions of the eastern and costal provinces, where rural enterprises and farming production rapidly developed in the 1980s and 1990s. Farmers were rich enough to contribute financial resources to education, while the strong township industry enabled local governments to collect a large education tax surcharge. In those underdeveloped regions where there were few township enterprises and farmers were relatively poor, such a system produced disappointing results.

In 1994 the central government again adjusted the distribution of national revenue by increasing the central government's share and reducing that of local governments, which in turn limited the potential of local governments

to invest in education, particularly in rural areas. Furthermore, throughout the 1990s more than 2 million *min-ban* (locally hired) teachers in rural primary and secondary schools were converted to *gong-ban* (state-hired) status for better salary and social benefits. However, this much-welcomed initiative resulted in a sharp increase in education costs in rural areas. In those relatively underdeveloped provinces and counties, a large portion of public expenditure went to pay rural schoolteachers' salaries. Some local authorities started borrowing from various sources for rural education.

Towards the end of the 1990s, the financial burden on farmers, particularly in those underdeveloped and poverty-stricken regions, became very serious since it damaged rural development. Because local authorities at township and village levels had to pay basic running costs of rural schools and maintenance of school buildings, as well as teachers' salaries, they had no choice but to collect more fees of various kinds from farmers. The situation became so alarming that the central government had to take action. In 2000, starting in two provinces in southern China, a new tax system was instated which aimed primarily at reducing farmers' financial burden. It abandons the education tax surcharge and bans the collection of any additional contributions from farmers for education purposes. Instead, governments at the county level and above are now required to include funds for running primary and secondary education in rural areas in their regular budgets.

In response to the changed tax system in rural areas, a new education management mechanism was adopted by the central government in 2001; this mechanism gives county governments the main responsibility for financing and managing compulsory education in rural areas (MOE, 2003a). It brings two fundamental changes: it removes the main burden of financing compulsory education in rural areas from the farmers and gives it back to governments, and it transfers responsibility for managing rural compulsory education from township and village authorities to higher-level (county) governments. These changes are expected to guarantee enough financial input and quality control.

The initial effects of the new management system of rural compulsory education reported by the education authorities have been basically positive, though the power game of "who should pay more" played by authorities at various levels is expected to continue for some time. Statistics collected by the Ministry of Education show that, of total expenditure on compulsory education in rural areas, the share of governments' budgetary allocations increased from 43 billion yuan RMB (US\$1 = 8.3 yuan RMB) in 1997 to 99 billion yuan RMB in 2002 (MOE, 2003a). By 2002, some 95% of China's 2,861 county governments had become the direct employers of their rural primary and secondary school teachers, thereby ensuring that teachers' salaries are paid on time. In the underdeveloped central and

western regions, however, there are still hundreds of county governments that cannot afford to pay education bills in full. Financial transfers from provincial governments and ultimately the central government are therefore essential for maintaining financial support for rural compulsory education in those regions.

In September 2003 the Chinese government explicitly identified the strategic status of rural education as the “priority among priorities.” It was announced that, henceforth, all increases in the state education budget would be used primarily to support rural education, particularly for the tasks of universalizing 9-year compulsory education and eliminating illiteracy among those aged 15–50.

To enhance the financial transfer from the central government to disadvantaged regions for rural education, a number of new national schemes with billions of yuan RMB have recently been established by the Ministry of Education. Some existing schemes have also been greatly expanded. These schemes are by nature joint efforts of the central government and relevant provincial governments, which aim to provide direct support to rural education in underdeveloped and poverty-stricken regions. For example, the National Scheme for Supporting Compulsory Education in Poor Areas (Phase II) is allocating 5 billion yuan RMB from the national education budget and 2.5 billion yuan RMB from the budget of the relevant provincial governments as matching funds to aid some 500 poor counties in their efforts to universalize 9-year compulsory education. These funds support teacher training, the renovation of school buildings, and the provision of free textbooks to students from poor families. Other national schemes include renovating old school buildings in rural areas, using distance learning to provide retraining to rural teachers, textbooks to pupils in poverty-stricken regions, etc. With heavy pressure from the central government, several provincial governments have also increased their financial transfers to local authorities specifically for supporting rural basic education. For instance, recently the Guangdong Provincial Government announced an allocation of 400 million yuan RMB to lower-level authorities in order to make up the deficit in their budgets for rural basic education. The funds will also be used to waive the incidental fees and provide free textbooks to students from low-income rural families (Xinhua News Agency, 2004d).

Historically financial expenditure per pupil in rural primary schools has always been lower than the national average. As a result of the efforts discussed above, the available data show that public expenditure on rural pupils has increased more rapidly than the national average in recent years. The disparities between rural school expenditure and the national average level are narrowing. Due to the central government’s firm commitment, compulsory education in rural areas now receives much more attention and

many more financial resources from the public budget. So long as the resources are used properly, there is a good chance that the universal 9-year compulsory education in the whole country will be achieved as targeted, by 2010, well before the time frame set up by the World Education Forum in 2000 in Dakar.

4. LITERACY CAMPAIGN: THE REMAINING ILLITERATES REPRESENT A BIGGER CHALLENGE

In China a consensus was reached long ago that bringing literacy education and lifelong learning opportunities to illiterate adults is vital to ensure their self-confidence, self-respect, and personal independence, as well as to safeguard human rights and achieve social equality. It is also vital in that it allows them to participate in social activities, find employment, increase their incomes, and improve their quality of life.¹

When the People's Republic of China was founded, 80% of its population could not read or write. By the end of the 1980s, the illiteracy rate had dropped to 15.88% (Figure 16-3). According to the results of the fourth national census conducted in 1990, there were 182 million illiterates and semi-illiterates aged 15 and over, representing an adult illiteracy rate of 22.23%. The number of illiterates between 15 and 50 was 61.7 million, 10.34% of the age group. It should be mentioned here that literacy work in the country has long been focused on rural areas, where most of the illiterate population lives.

In the early 1990s the central government set a goal of reducing the illiteracy rate of those aged 15–50 to less than 5% by 2000. Considering the vastness of the country and the striking differences between its 31 provinces (municipalities and autonomous regions), policy-makers established a strategy of reaching the goal in three steps by concentrating in different regions at different stages. The policy-makers planned to reach the target by 1996 in the 10 economically well-developed provinces (with 33% of China's population) and another 14 economically developed provinces (with 52% of the country's population) by 2000. In the six less developed provinces (with 15% of the population), the target was to reduce the illiteracy rate of the age group to 15% by 2000. Tibet, as an autonomous region, would reach the goal after 2000. Official statistics published after the fifth national census (2000) show that the measures produced significant results. The overall illiteracy rate dropped from 15.88% in 1990 to 6.72% in 2000; the adult

¹A comprehensive review of the policies and practices of the country's literacy campaign in the 1980s can be found in an earlier paper by the author (Tang, 1995).

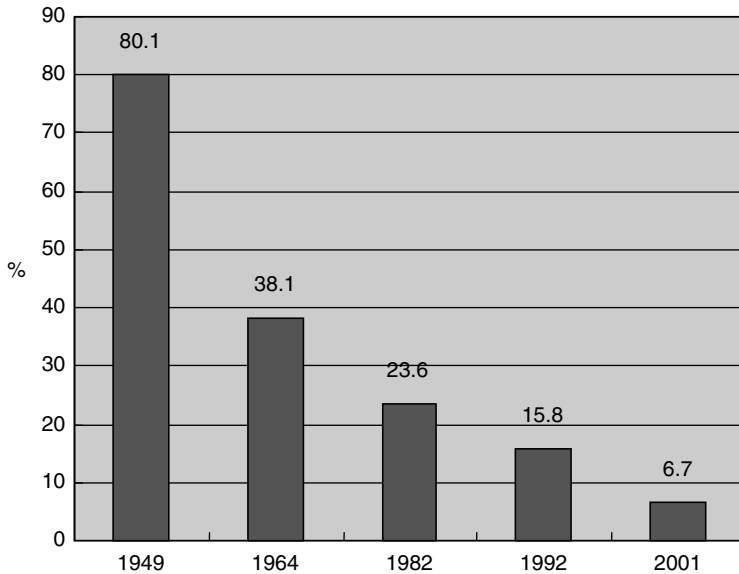


Figure 16-3. China's illiteracy rate.

illiteracy rate (aged 15 and over) decreased from 22.23% in 1990 to 8.72% in 2000. The illiteracy rate among those aged 15–50 had dropped to the goal of below 5%.

Even with such remarkable results, however, the work still to be done is much more difficult, as education authorities frankly admit. The obvious challenge is that the absolute number of the remaining illiterates and semi-illiterates, that is, 85 million, is high—10% of the total number of illiterates in the world. Of them, 70% are over 50 years old and 70% are women. Most live in underdeveloped rural and remote mountainous areas occupied mainly by ethnic minorities. The unit cost of providing literacy education to them is therefore very high. The progress of literacy education and its achievements in different regions are quite uneven. Although the national illiteracy rate was 6.72% (in 2000), eight provinces and autonomous regions (seven of them clustered in the west) have illiteracy rates of above 10%. More than 200 counties in western China have not reached the goal of reducing the illiteracy rate of those 15–50 to 5%. The education authorities forecast that it will take another 5 to 10 years for the six western provinces to reach the target, while Tibet will need another 20 years.

Realizing that literacy work had been deteriorating gradually and lagging behind—which poses more and more potential problems for the quality of the country's human resources and, more generally, social development—the Ministry of Education started to revamp its efforts. The

most striking feature of its current literacy policy is the application of the principle of “concentration”: available human and financial resources are mainly used to target illiterates aged 15–50, a population of approximately 20 million. The policy only “encourages” those illiterates older than 50 to receive literacy education. As a developing country with limited resources for education, there may be no other option. Emphasis is placed on providing literacy education to women and those in underdeveloped regions, as well as in regions with ethnic minorities.

The other feature of the current literacy policy is to link literacy campaigns with the efforts to universalize compulsory education in rural areas. This derives from the fact that in recent years weakened rural education has produced more than 1 million new illiterates yearly as a result of pupils dropping out of primary schools. This led the government to give equal priority to the goals of “basically universalizing 9-year compulsory education” and “basically eradicating illiteracy among young and middle-aged adults (aged 15–50),” describing them as the “goal of two basics” for rural education. The authorities requested rural primary and secondary schools and their teachers to participate actively in the literacy campaign, particularly by providing remedial and informal education programs to the young illiterates who are school dropouts.

No education program will work if it does not respond to the specific needs of different groups, and literacy is no exception. Different approaches are taken in rural areas by integrating formal and nonformal programs, concentrated and scattered programs, and school-based and home-based programs, to meet the needs of different illiterate groups, such as women, the elderly, and people living in scattered communities. One of the success stories in the literacy campaign is education and training provided through the existing three-tiered networks of “cultural–technical schools” located in counties, townships, and villages. These schools, which target rural youth and adults, provide adult education programs that combine literacy courses, vocational skills training, and seminars on farming and agricultural technology. Integrating training in vocational skills and agricultural technology stimulates interest in studying and improves the effectiveness of literacy education. Most counties, towns, and administrative villages have such schools, and they have been playing an important role in the country’s poverty alleviation campaign over the last two decades.

Two factors are essential to the success of the literacy campaign: (1) the universalization of 9-year compulsory schooling in rural areas so as to stop the production of new illiterates, and (2) sufficient financial support for literacy. At present, financial support comes from funds generated by local authorities in the local education budget and from donations by social groups and individuals. The national education budget’s only allocation for literacy is 20 million yuan RMB (some US\$2.5 million) for setting up a

national literacy prize to reward grassroots literacy workers. In education budgets at local levels, literacy education normally takes a backseat to other sectors of education. In recent years, the authorities have encouraged individuals to set up private schools to provide various levels of education. As literacy education has no obvious financial return and profit, the private sector and individuals generally have no great interest to invest in it. Considering the social significance of literacy education, no other resources can replace public input as the main financial source.

China has recently set new goals for its educational system for the first decade of the twenty-first century. It expects that by 2010 the illiteracy rate in the 15–50 age group will be reduced to below 2% and the overall adult illiteracy rate to below 5%. Literacy may become the weakest part of all the efforts to achieve the objective of education for all. Radical measures have to be undertaken to ensure sufficient financial input for literacy work, particularly from the central government, if education authorities do not want a lack of funding to become the obstacle that prevents them from realizing their objective that all citizens be able to read and write in the next decade or so.

5. EDUCATION FOR MIGRANT RURAL WORKERS' CHILDREN: NO ONE SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND

One of the distinguishing features of China's structural reform of its economy that started in the late 1970s is the movement of surplus rural laborers out of farming. Figures from the Chinese State Bureau of Statistics show that 130 million surplus rural laborers moved into nonagricultural sectors between 1978 and 2000, an average of 5.9 million a year. This figure includes those who are still working in rural areas but for the local "township enterprises." Particularly since the mid-1990s, following the acceleration of urban economic development, large numbers of rural laborers have been pouring into cities. Most of them work in the construction and service sectors. They are now called "migrant rural workers," and it is almost impossible, even for the government, to gain the accurate statistics concerning them. The most recent official estimation was that in 2003 there were 99 million rural workers employed in urban areas (Xinhua News Agency, 2004a). It is now recognized that they are one of the important factors contributing to the rapid economic development of the country. They help to counter labor shortages in urban regions and keep industry's labor costs low. They send money home, thereby making significant contributions to local, rural economies. A recent analysis conducted in An-hui Province (Xinhua News Agency, 2004b) shows that, of the total 40 million rural inhabitants in the province, over 7 million were working in other

provinces and cities in 2003, sending home 28 billion yuan RMB (some US\$340 million), an average of 4,000 yuan RMB for each migrant rural worker. The rising “migrant rural workers’ economy,” economists argue, has increased farmers’ income and even changed their lifestyles and values. It has facilitated poverty alleviation in rural areas and it will eventually help to narrow the country’s urban–rural gap.

However, such a healthy and positive phenomenon is accompanied by a “crisis” in education. A survey conducted in 2003 (Xinhua News Agency, 2004c) indicated that at present there are nearly 20 million migrant children under 18 who should receive compulsory education. Most of them are migrant rural workers’ children who live in urban areas with their parents. The survey revealed that close to half of these 20 million children did not enter school at 6, while 9.3% (1.86 million) have dropped out of school altogether. It was also found that in the nine large cities across the country where the survey was conducted, 60% of school dropouts aged 14 were working to help their families.

Although the Compulsory Education Law prohibits charging tuition fees for compulsory education, as a rule all primary and secondary schools in the country request that students pay “incidental fees” and for textbooks. Education authorities also request students who want to enroll in schools that are not located in their own community to pay additional fees of varying amounts. Migrant rural workers living in cities therefore find that they have to pay various types of additional fees if they want to have their children enrolled in urban public schools. Some cities charge additional “sponsoring fees,” which can be as high as one to several thousand yuan RMB per year. The inability to pay such additional and unaffordable fees was the major reason why many migrant rural workers’ children could not enter school when they were supposed to or dropped out before they could complete their compulsory schooling.

The state-run public schools, however, have their own explanation for charging additional fees to migrant children. The Compulsory Education Law stipulates that local governments are accountable for providing compulsory education to the local inhabitants. Providing compulsory education to migrant children is simply not their responsibility. The financial resources for compulsory education are also generated and allocated by the local governments. Children of compulsory education age are therefore entitled to education only when they are enrolled in schools located in the community where they are registered as permanent residents. Sharing scarce education resources with migrant children is not the preferred choice of any local education authorities.

China has long applied a system of registration of permanent residence for its citizens. Until the late 1970s there were significant differences between urban and rural residents in terms of employment opportunities,

medical service, pensions, and other social benefits. Many restrictions were applied to rural residents, making it difficult for them to migrate to urban regions. The economic reform initiated at the end of the 1970s has already largely dismantled the once very solid wall between urban and rural residents. Today rural workers can work legally in the urban areas. The reform of the system of registration of permanent residence has, however, lagged behind, and migrant rural workers and their children are usually given only temporary residence status when they live in cities. This does not prevent them from working in urban enterprises, but it means that their children are not eligible for benefiting from the financial resources allocated by the local government for urban compulsory education. They had to pay additional fees if they wanted to enroll in urban schools.

When education authorities detected some early warning signs in 1998, the central government issued a circular (MOE, 1998c) the same year requesting urban governments to create favorable conditions so that migrant children could receive compulsory education, and they encouraged public schools to open their doors to migrant children, allowing them to charge some additional fees. The document allows social groups or individuals to establish private schools for migrant children. Interestingly enough, the document also requested rural authorities to encourage compulsory school-age children not to migrate but rather to continue their education in their original communities. This apparently was almost impossible for local governments to implement. The 1998 circular did not solve the problem, contrary to the central government's hopes.

Faced with the high cost of enrolling their children in public schools, some migrant rural workers send them to private schools established by migrant rural workers themselves, which did not charge high fees. In Beijing there was only one such school in 1993; 10 years later, the number had risen to over 300, with more than 80,000 pupils enrolled. Such special private schools had become the main education providers for migrant children in many cities. Though they provided opportunities for migrant children to receive education, poor conditions attracted public attention. Media revealed that these schools generally did not have adequate campuses and classrooms. Many classrooms were in old houses, rented from local inhabitants, and some were considered too dangerous for habitation. The worst problem was that teachers in most of these schools were not professionally qualified.

In mid-2003 a major debate flared up in China's media on responsibility for providing compulsory education to children of migrant rural workers living in cities in order to safeguard "the right of all migrants' children to receive education." If the issue were not properly addressed, educators and sociologists argued, it would widen two already existing gaps, that is, the gap between urban and rural areas and that between the rich and the

poor. Furthermore, the migrant children—as a disadvantaged group whose poor learning conditions are quite the opposite of the conditions enjoyed by urban children—would feel marginalized by society, and, it was argued, growing up with such feelings could prove dangerous to society. What is first and foremost a question of the basic human rights of citizens is thus also an issue on which social coherence and order may well turn. Many experts including deputies of the People's Congress (or Parliament) insisted that it is the government's duty to address this issue in order to ensure social justice and maintain social stability.

In answering to strong social appeals, the central government has recently made several important policy decisions. In September 2003 the Chinese State Council (or Cabinet) issued a circular (MOE, 2003c) emphasizing that, in urban schools, students from migrant rural workers' families and those from local urban families should be "treated equally in all aspects," including being charged the same fees. It clearly stipulates that urban governments are responsible for providing compulsory education to migrant children living in their communities, mainly by enrolling them in public primary and secondary schools. Local urban governments are also requested to include in their budget additional funds for migrant children's education. Since many private schools for migrant children were inadequate, the central government instructed local education authorities to set minimal standards for such schools. This time the central government's instruction given to local authorities was clear, strong, and firm. It was reinforced at the beginning of 2004 by the Central Committee of China's ruling party's policy document on rural development (CCP, 2004). It specifically stipulated that "urban governments should include the funds for providing migrant rural workers with vocational training, children's education . . . in the regular budget."

Most people would agree that making efforts to improve access to mainstream education, instead of providing a special service, is the ideal way to address the issue of educational access of any disadvantaged groups. This seems to be the policy direction in which the Chinese education authorities are moving for the moment. Following the central government's policy decision to charge urban education authorities with the responsibility for providing education to migrant children, many cities opened their public schools, in late 2003 and early 2004, to children of migrant rural workers without charging heavy additional fees. For example, while encouraging the private schools for migrant children to improve their teaching qualities, Beijing municipal government publicly appealed to migrant rural workers to send their children to public primary and secondary schools, where extra fees are no longer charged to migrant children. The municipal government recently announced the enrollment of 70% of migrant children in Beijing in public schools and predicted an even higher percentage in future. In another

city, Wuhan, located in central China, there are currently 130,000 migrant children of compulsory education age living in the city. The municipal government has announced that more than 300 public schools accept children of migrant rural workers, who will pay the same incidental fees as the parents of local urban children.

Due to the decline in birth rates in urban regions, the number of primary and secondary school students in many cities has been decreasing since the mid-1990s. In Beijing, for instance, there were 955,000 students enrolled in primary schools in 1996. The number dropped to 569,500 in 2002, a decrease of 40% in 6 years. To maintain cost-effectiveness, the education authorities had no choice but to reduce the number of schools by closing down some and merging others. The campaign to provide educational access to migrant children could not have been launched at a better time. Reallocation and reorganization of both human and financial resources for education are now needed in order to integrate migrant children completely.

Strong public opinion, stimulated by media coverage as well as by resolutions proposed by deputies of the People's Congress, resulted in the central government's taking action quickly. Some experts, however, argue that the solutions described above were basically imposed by the central government through administrative measures that "force" municipal governments to pick up the education bill for migrant children. They suggest that if the solution is to be permanent, the equal right of migrant children to receive compulsory education in urban areas should be explicitly established by legislation, while the financial responsibility of providing compulsory education throughout the country should be borne primarily by the central government. Such debate will likely continue and accompany concrete actions taken by the authorities, educators, nongovernmental organizations, and other concerned partners.

Though many difficulties and obstacles are inevitable, it is undeniable that important and encouraging steps have been taken towards the safeguarding of every child's access to compulsory education as a fundamental human right. The authorities seem very determined to ensure that "no one should be left behind," a slogan adopted by some cities.

6. CONCLUSION

Since the World Declaration on Education for All was adopted in 1990, most governments in the world have made commitments to provide education opportunities in order to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth, and adults. Due to its size, China faces unique challenges in this process. The country's experience shows that for a large developing country, achieving universal access to education depends principally on the

efforts of the country itself; a strong and firm political commitment of the national authorities is the key factor. Only such commitment can ensure needed resources for delivering the country's promise to establish a sound educational system and only such commitment, accompanied by the mobilization of other social partners and the adoption of policy measures that ensure social justice and coherence, can safeguard its citizens' right to education, particularly to compulsory education.

Dr. Zhou Ji, the Chinese Minister of Education, was recently interviewed in Paris by UNESCO's newsletter *Education Today*. He said (Zhou, 2004):

although we are a developing country, we have the biggest population and the biggest education system in the world. Within the limits of our economic capacities, our ambition is to provide education to all people, so as to meet the needs of developing China and at the same time benefit the Chinese citizens.

So long as the political will remains strong, no one will doubt China's ability to overcome difficulties and to realize its ambitions. The significance of this for the rest of the world is obvious: If China, with its immense population, can attain the objective of providing education for all, who will not be able to do so?

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Chapter 17

CONTEXTS AND CHALLENGES OF WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN JAPAN

Choja Oduaran and Atsuko Kusano-Tsunoh

1. INTRODUCTION

Today Japan stands tall and is virtually unrivalled among nations as an industrial and economic miracle. It remains at the apex, yet to be overtaken by any other nation in the international competition in manufacturing and high technology, particularly in telecommunications. To date, Japan remains one of the greatest global exporters of capital. In 1984 alone, Japan's net long-term capital outflow was US\$50 million (Duke, 1986: 5). Japan has continued to rank higher than many other developed nations in technology (in particular, semiconductor production), military technology, and automobile technology and in the manufacture of cameras, videos, televisions, and musical instruments. It is perhaps that feat in economic achievement that partly led to anticipation that Japan's economic performance over the next 15 years would be stronger than that estimated for the 1990s. At the same time, however, there is concern that the relative importance of Japan in the global economy may decrease for various reasons. Prominent among them, at least from the perspective of the layperson, is Japan's seeming inability to manage its demographic challenges. For Japan's population is aging rapidly, which means it will need millions of new workers by 2015 to be able to manage the social dependency ratios that exist between the working population and retirees. It is feared that current Japanese strategies for meeting such challenges—for instance, requesting overseas Japanese to return to Japan, broadening opportunities for women in terms of economic participation, and doubling investments elsewhere in Asia—may prove inadequate. The global implication is that if such strategies do indeed fail, the resultant economic burden the United States economy would have to bear could be so great that it would weaken the global

economy. In view of such forecasts, many political leaders, scholars, and economists in Japan would do well to consider how access to education could be widened enough so as to provide at least part of the solution to the current challenges and thereby help to stave off the looming economic crisis.

In this chapter we examine how the widening of access to education in Japan has been evolving and what challenges and prospects recent developments hold. In what follows we shall, first, provide historical background on education in Japan; second, examine the issues in educational access prior to the Meiji Restoration; third, examine the growth and prospects of educational access after the Meiji Restoration; fourth, highlight innovative cases in widening access; fifth, discuss the challenges and prospects involved in widening access; and, finally, make some tentative suggestions on the basis of the foregoing as to how widening access to education should enable Japan to continue to provide economic leadership in an era of globalization.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: EDUCATION

The educational history of Japan is complex. By the ninth century, Kyoto, the imperial capital, had five institutions of higher learning. During the remainder of the Heian Period, other schools were established by the imperial court and the nobility. Between 1185 and 1600 Zen Buddhist monasteries emerged as important centers of learning, and by the fifteenth century the Ashikagoa School (Ashikaga Gakko) flourished as a center of higher learning.

Between the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, Jesuit missionaries who accompanied Portuguese traders opened some mission schools for Japanese converts to Christianity. However, when between 1600 and 1867 Japan was reunited by the Tokugawa regime, the missionary educational enterprise was halted. In 1640, foreigners were expelled from Japan, Christianity was banned, and almost all foreign contact was prohibited. For 200 years thereafter, Japan was almost completely isolated (Duke, 1986: 45–56). The Tokugawa regime introduced its own system of education. When the Tokugawa regime took power in 1600, few common people in Japan could read or write, but by the end of the period, learning had become quite widespread. Indeed, the Tokugawa educational system left behind a valuable legacy of an increasingly literate Japanese society, a meritocratic ideology, and an emphasis on discipline and competent performance—all of which have largely contributed to the educational development of Japan down to the beginning of the Meiji Restoration in 1868. We shall soon return to the Meiji Era, but here we wish to point out that although Japan had introduced an

egalitarian and almost universal system of education by the early twentieth century, its higher education system remained multitracked and extremely selective and elitist. Thus, it could be said that Japan's educational system has witnessed times of "open" and "closed" widening of access to education.

3. ISSUES IN WIDENING EDUCATIONAL ACCESS BEFORE THE MEIJI RESTORATION

As noted above, the educational system introduced by the Tokugawa regime placed tremendous emphasis on literacy, meritocracy, and competent performance. The regime made a deliberate effort to universalize access to literacy. At the same time, however, its emphasis on meritocracy and competent performance must have involved some form of selectivity. The whole idea of selectivity suggests a limiting of access, since only the "best" could have access, regardless of whether they had the financial means. This meant that there was little or no need for the regime to establish more educational institutions or other cultural institutions of learning. The kind of circumscribed provision of educational access at that time is well illustrated by the *bushi* (or Samurai), who had been warriors from time immemorial. During the Tokugawa Era, their roles changed from being predominantly warriors to becoming administrators, which represented a privileged transformation of their social standing. More important, however, is that the *bushi* had more education and so their literacy rate improved tremendously.

The Tokugawa regime's efforts to widen access to education, despite the introduction of the principle of selectivity, were considerable. For by the time of the Meiji Restoration, there were over 2,000 Hans (domains), 276 of which had established schools, and more Samurai and commoners began to attend private academies (Sugai and Tsuchiya, 2001: 10–15 MOE, 2003). During this time, the number of *terakoya* (temple schools, which had no religious orientation) rose to about 14,000. Thus access to education had arguably been widened in remarkable ways.

4. EDUCATIONAL ACCESS DURING THE MEIJI ERA (1868–1912)

According to Schoppa (1991: 1), the Meiji Restoration saw the emergence of a number of reformists. They transformed feudal Japan into a fast-growing modern nation-state. These reformists aimed the nation's resources and energies towards the major goal of "catching up with the West." That was why missions were sent abroad to study the educational systems of leading Western countries. The missions returned with the ideas of decentralization,

local school boards charged with the management of the school system, and teacher autonomy. After studying systems outside Japan, the nation adopted a new educational system. As a consequence, primary school enrollments rose from roughly 40–50% in the 1870s to more than 90% in 1900 (Duke, 1986: 15–20).

The Meiji leaders initiated universal primary education, as well as a meritocratic educational system, which gave Japan an educated and trainable labor force and a talented elite that enabled the nation to maximize its human resources and thereby take significant steps towards catching up with the West. It is noteworthy that after Japan's earlier preoccupation with Western educational systems, particularly those in place in the United States, the 1890s saw Japan shift towards a much more conservative and tradition-oriented system of education, which gave credence to Japanese values, especially to Confucian precepts and principles as laid out in the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education. This Rescript introduced the highly centralized governmental control of education, which lasted until the end of World War II. The widening of access to education during and after the Meiji Era (1868–1912) had a number of salient characteristics, which we shall sketch in the remainder of this section.

The government's approach to widening access was initiated by the issuance of the 1872 Government Order of Education, which sought to introduce and consolidate equal opportunity in education. The gains in the educational system resulting from that order were further consolidated by the Education Order of 1879, even though it had some defects. However, Japan initiated new efforts to widen access when in 1886 it introduced a 9-year program of compulsory education together with a vigorous teacher-training program. The year 1886 was also a milestone one because of the numerous orders the government issued—the Elementary School Order, Middle School Order, Normal School Order, and the Imperial University Order—all of which promoted the widening of access.

Seeking to widen access still further, the government introduced several laws in 1893 and 1899. They cleared the way for the introduction of vocational schools, girls' high schools, and women's education. Between 1894 and 1907 some significant and innovative efforts were made to further the course of widening access. For example, a 4-year compulsory schooling was fully enforced, and in 1908 it was actually extended to 6 years of compulsory schooling.

5. POST-MEIJI ERA EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

The Meiji Era was succeeded by the Taisho Era (1912–1926) and the Showa Era (1926–present). In the post-Meiji Era there has been an exponential increase in school enrollments and an expansion of the entire educational

system in Japan. For example, the 1918 University Order promoted the idea of single faculty universities, as well as public and private universities that expanded access to higher education while also introducing a structure of 7 years of higher education. The post-Meiji Era has also witnessed some dramatic changes in widening access. In the public sector, educational institutions were deliberately kept small, selective, differentiated, and of a high quality, but also elitist; private sector involvement in the provision of education further guaranteed the widening of access, especially at the secondary and higher education levels. This was in response to a high demand for education. Despite that major shift, some scholars have criticized the Japanese government concerning the rate at which it has encouraged the widening of access. James and Benjamin (1988: xvi–xvii) have observed that since 1945, when Japan began to be led by the Conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), government has maintained the lowest rate of government expenditure for education among modern developed nations. This has meant that only the minimum quantity of education deemed necessary for national purposes was offered publicly, and everything else was considered a consumer good that should be provided by private entrepreneurs.

In the post-Meiji Era the First and Second Initiatives have also been introduced in Japanese education. According to Schoppa (1991: 3–4), the First Initiative aimed at transforming the Japanese educational system. In 1967 the Minister of Education, Kennoki Toshihiro, requested that the Central Council on Education (CCE) review the entire Japanese educational system with a view to producing

basic guidelines for the development of an integrated education system that could meet the needs of contemporary Japan. By 1971, a set of new guidelines were introduced which among other things guaranteed an increase in the diversity of the school system, more flexible curriculum, streaming, grade-skipping and new salary scales for graduate and trained teachers. (Schoppa, 1991: 4)

More importantly, the committee specifically considered widening access and recommended increased aid to kindergartens, education for the handicapped, and increased involvement of the private education sector in order to cope with the increased demand for education. Unfortunately, this initiative met with some resistance. Japanese students, for example, decried the fact that they did not have any alternative to the standard 6-3-3 system. By 1984 the Prime Minister, Nakasone Yasuhiro, introduced the Second Initiative. He did so because, he maintained, the First Initiative had failed, and in fact because it had been dictated by the Ministry of Education. He then established a supracabinet advisory body that was to address several problems plaguing the Japanese educational system. Ultimately, however, it

too failed—largely because it discarded several proposals for real change (Schoppa, 1991: 5). Despite the challenges the widening of educational access met with in Japan, progress was nevertheless made in the post-Meiji Era (1868–1912), progress that is most visible in the increase in the number of schools and increased school enrollments. This can be illustrated by way of some figures adapted from the work of James and Benjamin (1988).

Table 17-1 does not reveal a steady increase in access. For example, there was a decline in the number of public schools from 16,575 in 1943 to 14,208 in 1980. By 2003, however, the number of students in national lower secondary schools had risen to 3,748,319 and the number of private lower secondary schools was 232,329 (MOE, 2004: 43). This is a remarkable increase in access.

Note that in Tables 17-1–17-3 there has been significant private sector involvement in widening access to education in Japan, at least in terms of physical entry. The data does not support any conclusions about qualitative issues.

Table 17-1. Public and private secondary schools and students, 1913–1980.

Year	Number of schools				Number of students (in '000s)			
	Total	Public	Private	% Private	Total	Public	Private	% Private
1913	9,188	8,701	487	5.3	681	614	67	9.8
1923	16,873	16,457	416	2.5	1,691	1,546	144	8.6
1933	17,710	16,998	712	4.0	2,287	2,013	248	10.8
1943	20,284	16,575	3,709	18.3	5,222	3,706	1,516	29.0
1953	15,678	14,112	1,566	10.0	7,715	7,046	670	8.7
1960	15,759	14,146	1,613	10.2	9,126	7,994	1,132	12.4
1970	14,950	13,150	1,800	12.0	9,848	7,522	1,427	15.9
1980	16,001	14,208	1,793	11.2	9,716	8,226	1,450	14.9

Source: James and Benjamin (1988: 20).

Table 17-2. Public and private higher educational institutions and students, 1883–1980*.

Year	Number of schools				Number of students (in '000s)			
	Total	Public	Private	% Private	Total	Public	Private	% Private
1913	195	139	56	28.7	84	59	25	29.9
1923	327	234	93	28.4	145	86	59	40.9
1933	403	264	139	34.5	218	111	107	48.9
1943	438	272	166	37.9	398	202	196	49.2
1953	461	150	311	67.5	536	219	317	59.2
1960	525	171	354	67.4	712	242	470	66.0
1970	930	235	695	74.7	1,714	423	1,291	75.3
1980	1,025	270	755	73.7	2,253	536	1,717	76.2

*Includes technical colleges, junior colleges, and universities.

Source: James and Benjamin (1988: 20).

Table 17-3. Students and teachers in public and private high schools (upper secondary schools), 1960–1982.

Year	Enrollments (in '000s)				Teachers				Enrollments/teacher			
	Total	Public	Private	% Private	Total	Public	Private	% Private	Total	Public	Private	Private/public
1960	3,239	2,310	929	28.7	131,224	100,891	30,333	23.1	24.69	22.90	30.64	1.3
1965	5,074	3,409	1,665	32.8	191,524	144,539	48,985	25.3	26.22	23.58	33.99	1.4
1970	4,232	2,947	1,285	30.4	202,440	154,478	47,962	23.7	20.90	19.08	26.78	1.4
1975	4,333	3,025	1,038	30.2	222,733	171,311	50,847	22.8	19.45	17.60	25.73	1.5
1980	4,622	3,322	1,300	28.1	243,627	189,227	54,400	22.3	18.97	17.55	23.90	1.4
1982	4,601	3,322	1,278	27.8	248,495	193,167	55,328	22.3	18.51	17.20	23.10	1.3

Sources: 1960–1975, Educational Standards in Japan (MOE, 1975: 256–279, 314–315); 1980, Mombusho (MOE, 1981: 1, 15, 18); 1982, Calculated from information provided by Japan Foundation for the Promotion of Private Schools (quoted in James and Benjamin, 1988: 21).

Table 17-4. Students and teachers in public and private universities, 1969–1982.

	Enrollments (in '000s)					Teachers					Enrollments/teacher				
	Total	National	Local	Private	% Private	Total	National	Local	Private	% Private	Total	National	Local	Private	% Private
1960	628	195	30	404	64.3	44,434	24,410	4,725	15,299	34.3	14.14	7.98	6.27	26.35	3.3
1965	938	238	38	661	70.5	57,445	29,828	5,089	22,528	39.2	16.32	7.99	7.52	29.34	3.7
1970	1,407	310	50	1,047	74.4	76,275	36,840	5,342	34,093	44.7	18.44	8.40	9.38	30.70	3.7
1975	1,734	358	51	1,325	76.4	89,648	42,020	5,602	42,026	46.9	19.34	8.51	9.08	31.54	3.7
1980	1,835	407	52	1,377	75.0	102,985	47,843	5,794	49,348	47.8	17.82	8.50	8.99	27.90	3.3
1982	1,780	405	50	1,325	74.5	107,486	49,944	5,766	51,766	48.2	16.56	8.10	8.60	25.60	3.2

Source: James and Benjamin (1988: 23).

As with other levels of education, the private sector has been active in widening access to university education. For example, of the 628 universities in Japan in 1960, private universities amounted to 404, or 64.3% of the total national figure (Table 17-4). For all intents and purposes, therefore, the widening of access to education has been dominated more by private initiatives than by public efforts. One explanation of this is that, while the government has been overtly interested in curriculum control and growing class sizes, the private sector has been much more driven by market forces and continues to be actively involved in widening access to education.

In Japan the pursuit of improving citizens' abilities has cultivated what Duke (1986: xvii) describes as Japanese workers who are extraordinarily hardworking, strongly oriented towards quality work, deeply loyal to workplace groups and company, and superbly educated with competitive skills. To date, Japanese industrial productivity is intimately related to the productivity of its schools. The major truth that has emerged from Japanese efforts to widen access to education is that by ensuring that everyone is included in the educational system the whole of Japanese society will thrive. This can be illustrated by way of two innovative cases: the Kumon Math Program and the children with multiple disabilities.

6. INNOVATIVE CASES IN WIDENING ACCESS

6.1 The Kumon Math Program

The Kumon Math Program was originated in 1954 by Toru Kumon, a Japanese high school mathematics teacher. Moved by a desire to stimulate his son's interest in mathematics, Kumon conceptualized and developed some worksheets in mathematics for his son, Takeshi, whom he had solve some math problems at home each day. Takeshi worked at his own pace, revising sections he did not completely understand. Within a period of 1 year, Takeshi grew in confidence in solving more math problems, and was indeed learning much faster than he ever had been at school. In no time, word about the success of Kumon's experiment got out, and more and more local children began to join the program; this culminated in the opening of the first Kumon Center in Tokyo. By 1969 the number of children in the Kumon Center rose to 10,000, and in 1973 Kumon opened its first overseas office in the United States, and then in other countries. Such was the success of the Kumon Math Program that by 1998 the total enrollments globally exceeded 2.5 million. Over the last 40 years, the number of children who have benefited from the Kumon Math Program has risen to over 7 million. Since it is widely used in Japan, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Hong

Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Australia, this program can justly be regarded as an international case study of a private initiative that led to the widening of access to one subject area.

The example of the Kumon Math Program (www.kumon.com) in widening access for effective appreciation of and participation in mathematics has been of immense benefit to many participants. Among other things, the program is renowned for having helped to generate the following among participants:

- (i) *Confidence and self-esteem.* As participants work through their study—which always is at the level that is most appropriate to their present ability—they are encouraged and motivated by their teacher and parents. In this way, their self-esteem and confidence begin to increase, which motivates them to tackle other problems not only in mathematics but also in other school subjects.
- (ii) *Concentration.* Participants are expected to focus on their work for 10–15 minutes every day, solving problems in mathematics that are tailored to level at which each participant currently finds him- or herself.
- (iii) *Self-study skills.* The program uses worksheet arranged in order of difficulty with the participants moving from the simple to the complex or from the known to the unknown. In the worksheet, the preceding one is simpler than the one that follows, and each worksheet has examples and instructions or cues that are inbuilt to encourage the learners. Eventually, the learners develop the sense of independence, self-discipline, and that is applied in the other school subjects.

The Kumon Math Program's emphasis on the importance of exploring and tapping the potential of every learner is an access lodestar for anyone seeking to determine how to help those who gain access to education to stay involved or to sustain their interest to the end.

6.2 Access for children with multiple disabilities

Another innovative practice for discussion in the context of Japan concerns disabled children. In many places, the discussion of access to education as social justice is restricted to those without disabilities. In 1999 the Japanese Department of Education for Children with Multiple Disabilities carried out a survey focused on children and students who are deafblind (Sugai and Tsuchiya, 2001: 1). The aim of the survey was to investigate educational provisions that have been made for children and students who are deafblind, and the methods used in meeting the challenges that confront them. In doing so, the survey sought to build on an earlier one inaugurated in the

1950s at the Yamanshi Prefectural School for the Blind (Umezu, 1974, cited in Sugai and Tsuchiya, 2001: 1). The 1999 survey defined deafblindness as a “measurement of ‘corrected visual acuity less than (below) 0.3,’ and *not measurable* for blindness, and ‘a hearing threshold level more than (above) 30dB,’ or *not measurable* for deafness. [...] The term deafblindness was taken to mean the condition where both disabilities coexist” (p. 2).

The survey used a questionnaire that included questions concerning the conditions of students’ visual and hearing conditions, contents of their education, context and class management, communication system, teachers’ profile, cooperation with other mainstream institutions, and educational difficulties. The survey identified the causes of deafblindness to include: CHARGE syndrome, Cokayne’s syndrome, Downs syndrome, Cytomegalovirus, 4P monosomy, Mirror Decker syndrome, and Corneria de Langue syndrome (Umezu, 1974, p. 4 Quoted in Sugai and Tsuchiya, 2001). Since the study, Japan has embarked on innovative nationwide programs aimed at mitigating the challenges faced by this special category of Japanese and at broadening previous approaches to widening access. The assumption here is that access cannot be complete until every segment of society is given the opportunity to learn anywhere, at any time, and by any means necessary.

7. CHALLENGES

Japan’s great success thus far in widening access to education does not mean that no challenges remain to be faced. On the contrary, access still requires much attention in Japan. One challenge concerns Japan’s aging population. With the majority of its population growing older, there is a clear need for new workers and thus an urgent need to widen access to education for all segments of the working population by 2015. This is the only way Japan can maintain the current dependency ratios between working Japanese and retirees.

On the surface, it might seem that Japan can cope with the problems bound up with its aging population. But this is not quite the case. Japan may be forced to embark upon immigration reforms aimed at allowing import labor into Japan. If the country does not want to initiate such a reform, it may have to entice overseas Japanese to return home to mitigate the challenge of inadequate expert labor supply—a difficult proposition, not least because the government would have to “force” Japanese to return who are excelling abroad. On the other hand, Japan still has another option, and it involves its women. It is very likely that Japan will have to broaden opportunities for more women to learn and enter its workforce if it is going to remain one of the world’s economic giants.

8. CONCLUSION

This chapter has traced the widening of access to education in Japan from before the Meiji Restoration in 1868 to the present. We demonstrated that there have been consistent efforts to widen access, though some factors were retained along the way that hampered the achievement of universal access. Gains made in the post-Meiji Era were much more profound, especially from the 1980s, than any achieved before. Although Japan has yet to achieve 100% access to education and lifelong learning, its innovative approach of allowing private sector involvement in the widening of access, such as in the Kumon Math Program and the provision for children with multiple disabilities, certainly hold valuable lessons for other nations, lessons that warrant careful study. The study and implementation of Japan's successful approaches will doubtless lead to a significant widening of access to education and thereby to greater social justice and economic strength, both in Japan and abroad.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN

Rukhsana Zia

1. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The present chapter considers social justice in connection with the widening of access to education in Pakistan. We briefly outline the country's historical, socioeconomic, and political contexts and seek to relate them to the concept of social justice. Focusing on educational environment and school enrollment ratios, our aim is to delineate the widening of access to education in the country as an expression of social justice.

Access to education can be most readily assessed by considering participation rates of school-age children, enrollment ratios, gender parity at different levels of Basic Education (BE), and across different subject areas. Here we seek to determine whether access to education is regarded as social justice, and if so, how it is manifested in public life. Needless to say, an assessment of social justice in education should not be confined to quantitative access to education across different levels but should also consider the quality of education. However, the focus here is not on the quality of education per se, but only on quantity.

Our discussion is confined to the school education level. We acknowledge that access to education can be nonformal and informal, especially within the context of lifelong learning. Of course, access to education may not be the only indicator of educational progress (UIS, 2003: 9). Likewise, access to, and in certain cases completion of, primary education does not necessarily guarantee that basic literacy has been acquired (p. 9). However, these possibilities do not impinge on the value of data on access, participation, and completion rates for policy-making, charting trends, and comparing data across nations. Such data can also give indications of disparity and discrimination, as in the case of gender. Clearly, unless children have access to schooling and education, talk of quality will have little meaning. While we consider Gross Enrollment Rates (GER) and Net Enrollment Rates (NER) as indicators of access to education, we are well aware that there are

inherent limitations to conclusions based on these rates insofar as the conclusions exclude other significant indicators. There may be other explanations for low access and participation; for instance, it could also be due to lack of available facilities for schooling. Nor do enrollment rates necessarily reflect equity in the use of available capacity. Moreover, 100% or even more than 100% enrollment rates could mean that some children are not counted, such as those outside of the official age range for attending school, whether they be repeaters or late starters or even early starters. Concerns about a possible lack of complementary data and/or triangulation by household data (which can provide a clearer picture for out-of-school children) or a lack of high quality data (since disadvantaged populations could be neglected in data collection: e.g., homeless, migrants, or refugees) will temper the conclusions drawn in this chapter. Needless to say, the various indicators that are and could be used for measuring access to education could be highly varied and involve a diverse set of limitations, depending on the purpose for which data is used—for example, survival and completion rates are valuable in measuring access to education, but they cannot be interpreted as a measure of learning outcome (UIS, 2003: 17).

In this chapter we do not enter into the debate about the concept implicit in the words “social” or “justice,” nor do we question the motives that guide people to dispense with social justice (Novak, 2000). For our purposes here, politically and ideologically speaking, “social justice” is considered neutral and open to interpretation. We accept the contention that it is one of the chief virtues of democracy, and more importantly, that social justice is an ongoing process (not an outcome) aimed at transforming a system inclined to injustice. Suffice it to add here that in Islam, by virtue of adhering to Islamic principles, any and all acts by individuals are subject to personal rules of just conduct. This code of conduct would thus, by and large, apply to Muslim societies and nations in general, and hence to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in particular.

2. BACKGROUND

Pakistan came into being in 1947, and Islam, as the religion of the majority, plays a dominant role in all domains of Pakistani life, especially so in the constitutional and legal, the sociocultural and the political spheres. The country has a legal code with a parallel system of Islamic courts, and yet at an informal level it is regulated by traditional laws and customs (Zia and Bari, 1999: 3) that at times tend to override statutory and Islamic laws. Though there continues to be considerable debate about the way in which, and extent to which, Islam has been and should be used, especially in politics and governance, an increasing “Islamization” of the state is evident (Zia, 2003a,b: 154).

Pakistan's brief history is marked by conflicts in the political sphere, with military coups having occurred in 1958, 1969, and 1977, and most recently in 2000—all in the name of democracy. Over the years, there have been attempts to establish democratic process, but they have had no lasting impact. Political leaders have tended instead to squander their power. The recent government (ironically, with a military man as its head) has experimented with a new scheme of local governance. The policy is meant to empower citizens at grassroots levels, encourage them to participate in decisions that affect their own area, and also educate them in the practical aspects of democracy. Launched in 2000, the New Local Government Plan provides the masses with access to governance in order to remove the rural–urban divide (NRB, 2000: 1). In addition to being free to participate in general elections, women have been allocated 33% of seats at all levels of governance. This has been a major step in affirmative action insofar as it provides equal access to and mainstreaming women in the political–governmental arena.

Pakistan is extremely diverse culturally and ethnically. It is basically a feudal value system with patriarchal trends. Religion tends to have a host of interpretations, largely due to widespread ignorance and illiteracy, which are promoted in some cases as acceptable cultural/social norms (UNESCAP, 1997: 3). The human development indicators are quite low (e.g., infant mortality, children out of school), while gender development indicators are even lower. Pakistan's poor planning, organization, and management of the social sector have resulted in an ineffective social development of the country (Sadik, 1997: 291).

Economically Pakistan's Gross National Product (GNP) (6% average) has experienced a healthy increase over the years, but this has been offset by a massive growth in population (due to a high fertility rate coupled with migration from outside the country, most recently from Afghanistan). Economic growth in the 1960s surpassed norms, but was accompanied by low social and human development indicators. In recent years there has been a shortfall in development, and many factors have added to the malaise in the economy.

3. THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN PAKISTAN

Social justice in a broad sense encompasses social, political, educational, legal, economic, and other human rights, all of which are interlinked with one another. Social justice ensures that no person is discriminated against on the basis of belief, gender, color, caste, wealth, or social status. It also reflects rule of law for all without considering their position in the society.

It encourages the establishment of institutions that promote respect and human dignity, as well as equality before law at all levels, administrative, legal, social, political, and economic (DCHD, 1996: 48).

The concept of social justice composes the cornerstone of the Constitution of Pakistan (GoP, 2000). In fact the first major step in framing the Constitution was the Constituent Assembly's passage of the Objectives Resolution in March 1949, which defined the basic principles of the new state. It decreed that Pakistan would be a state

wherein the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice, as enunciated by Islam, shall be fully observed; wherein the Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accordance with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy *Quran* and *Sunnah*; [and] wherein adequate provision shall be made for the minorities freely to progress and practice their religions and develop their cultures. (Raza, 1997: 4)

The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution clearly identifies Islam as the state religion and makes it the state's responsibility to enable Moslems, individually and collectively, to live in accordance with the principles set out in the *Quran* (the holy book of the Muslims) and the *Sunnah* (teachings of the prophet Muhammad) (GoP, 2000). There have been intermittent efforts to define the scope of fundamental rights in Pakistan between 1949 and 1973. However, while the first constitution of 1956 drew heavily on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) for the chapter on human rights, it notably ignored many other rights, including a firm commitment to education and health. The founders of Pakistan saw no contradiction in the teachings of Islam and the modern concepts of democracy and equality. Theocracy was explicitly rejected and all Muslims and non-Muslims were granted equal rights and protections; later events disproved the optimism of the nation's founders. The first change arose with its name: the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; then it was decreed that the chief executive of the country must be a Muslim (giving a clear definition of a Muslim thereby excluding non-Muslims); and finally there was an "Islamization" of laws, that is to say, an effort has been made to bring all laws into harmony with Islamic injunctions (only the Parliament had the right to change such laws). None of these changes threatened the fundamental rights of citizens, but General Zia did exploit them in order to create a quasi-theocratic order, which considerably eroded basic human rights and those enumerated in the UDHR (Rehman, 1997: 312). His regime added a considerable body of legislation that discriminates between citizens on basis of belief and gender, such as the Hudood Laws and amendments to Muslim Family Law Ordinance. Later governments were unable to rectify the situation, which persists to this date, leaving minorities, peasants, children, and women

vulnerable (Shirkat Gah, 2000: 63). Unfortunately, there has been no progress towards repealing or modifying such laws since successive governments have failed to resolve the contradictions between universal human rights and the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution.

Pakistan's Constitution charges the government with various responsibilities, including the provision of the basic necessities of food, clothing, housing, education, and medical relief for all citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed, or race; the provision of free compulsory secondary education; the promotion of the participation of all citizens in every form of national activity, including employment; the discouragement of parochial, racial, tribal, sectarian, and provincial prejudices among citizens; the reduction of disparity between various income levels; and ensuring that women have the opportunity to participate fully in all spheres of life. While the concept of social justice is clearly espoused by the Constitution of Pakistan, it is not always manifest in the everyday lives of its citizens.

4. EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN PAKISTAN

Social justice designates a "process" in which steps are taken to transform a system otherwise inclined to perpetuate an injustice. To establish social justice in an educational setting it is necessary to be fully aware of and then counter any injustices that exist in that setting. In this section we shall highlight the injustices in the country's schooling/educational system by defining trends and the present situation in the country.

Upon gaining independence, Pakistan had a poorly educated population and few schools or universities. Although the educational system has expanded greatly since then, debate continues about curriculum and quality. Nevertheless, "quantity" remains the most pressing concern in the country.

Relatively limited resources have been allocated to education, although there has been an increase in recent decades. In 1960 public spending on education was only 1.1% of the GNP, but by 1990 the figure had risen to 3.4%. This amount compared poorly with the 33.9% being spent on defense in 1993, and the situation has not changed much to this day. Although the Pakistani government enlisted the assistance of various international donors to help to realize the education agenda outlined in its Seventh Five-Year Plan (1988–1993), the results did not measure up to expectations. In 1992 the government reiterated the need to mobilize a large share of national resources to finance education, and most recently the Education Sector Reforms of 2001 have given impetus to the educational objectives framed within the context of the Dakar follow-up report.

Despite improvement over the last 25 years or so (from 21% in 1970 to 36% in 1992 and then to 43% in 2000), adult literacy (among those aged 15 and over) remains low and the gap between illiterates and literates has persisted (UNESCO, 2000: 18). Many factors (contextual, educational, demand-and-supply-related, etc.) contribute to and aggravate the current bleak situation, where illiteracy and poor educational access and enrollment prevail throughout the country. Some of the oft-cited reasons are the poverty of families, child labor, malnutrition, poor health, the sociocultural and structural environment, distance from school, access to transportation, and a lack of schools or appropriate facilities and/or teachers. The situation is further exacerbated by a lack of governmental regulation and control, which not only affects the quality of education but also produced “ghost schools” (those existing on paper only), as well as schools with vast differences in physical amenities and even schools that hold the needs of learners in contempt.

A comparison of data reveals significant disparity in the context of educational enrollment, specifically by provinces, regions (urban versus rural), economic status, and gender. It is clear that the same translates to educational opportunity and access, raising serious concerns about equity.

5. PROMOTING THE WIDENING OF ACCESS TO EDUCATION: SOME MODELS

From 1947 to 1997 educational policies repeatedly called for the expansion of the public school system in order to universalize education, especially primary education and literacy. The government has also repeatedly asserted that the provision of access to education is the obligation of the state (GoP, 1998: 1), and yet the situation remains bleak. Lately, the government has initiated considerable programs, especially to generate an increase in primary level enrollment in the public sector. Some of the initiatives are briefly delineated below.

Expansion of the public educational system: Though the nationalization mandate of the 1970s has been reversed, the government is aware of its massive responsibility to educate its populace. The public system is being consolidated in terms of both quantity and quality. Currently, the focus on quantity is the prime concern, and numerous efforts are underway to increase and retain enrollment in the public school system.

Devolution and decentralization of educational management: The Local Government Act of 2001 has empowered local governments and decentralized the governance of education. Decision-making and the delivery of social services (managing primary and secondary education) have been delegated to the district governments. So far, the mechanisms and institutional

arrangements have not been streamlined. Although it is expected to improve access to and the quality of service delivery in education (Government of Punjab, 2003: 14), it is too early to assess the expected outcomes.

Promotion of early childhood education and care: In Pakistan 131 million of its populace are under 5 years of age, nearly half of which are 3–5 years old (GoP, 2003: 60). Only 25% of the children go through preprimary education (p. 61). The system of preschool education had been well developed in the formal public school system, but was neglected in the 1980s. Now the government intends to focus on early childhood education (ECE); apart from the consolidation of preprimary classes (*katchi*) in schools, the Department of Social Welfare is initiating day care centers, particularly for working mothers. In urban areas especially, private ECE institutions abound and are well organized, but they cater to the relatively affluent. One-fourth of the total ECE education is provided by the private sector.

The Prime Ministers Literacy Commission: This commission was established in the 1990s to increase literacy or eradicate illiteracy. Literacy centers were established all over the country in a partnership between the public and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Despite an ambitious start, it has been bogged down by administrative constraints and governance issues, especially those related to monitoring and evaluation.

Quranic literacy: The majority of children in Pakistan learn to read the *Quran* in Arabic at a very early age. Urdu (national language) script is similar to Arabic script. This fact has been efficiently used to teach the reading and writing of Urdu, thus increasing the national literacy rate. It is an innovative move that is being effectively used, especially by NGOs in the country.

Promotion of private enterprise: Private education had virtually disappeared in the 1970s, but with the amendment of the nationalization enactment in 1979, it has made a comeback and is being encouraged by the government to take on added responsibility for providing access to education. According to government estimates from 2001, private institutions hold a 30% share of the total schools or institutions in the country, though they concentrate mostly in the urban areas. Considering the tendency of private education towards elitism, the government is encouraging private education to relate to the overall objectives of the national education policy. More regulatory mechanisms still need to be developed to facilitate and streamline the private sector so that it will play a constructive role in this regard. This poses a challenge to the concept of social justice, especially in terms of equality and equity in the educational process.

Public-private partnership: The government has launched various initiatives to encourage public-private partnership in the educational process. Some noteworthy initiatives are (i) the “adopt a school” program, whereby management of selected schools is transferred to NGOs and civil society,

(ii) the “community participation program,” and (iii) the establishment of school councils to encourage parental involvement and surveillance in the running of schools. These are some of the innovative enterprises, however, that have shown promising results with regard to encouraging access to education, especially for less affluent households and female education (GoP, 2003: 15).

Second chance for dropouts: With the explicit aim of retention and to encourage dropouts to reenter the system, the alternatives to the formal public system have been promoted—for example, nonformal education (NFE), part-time education classes, multiple point entry system, evening classes, flexible school days and timings, and diversified curricula.

Nonformal education: NGOs have played a significant role in educating masses using NFE. Lately the government has started to acknowledge its role in this regard, and efforts are underway to provide equivalency to NFE students to make secondary education accessible to them.

Madrassah/mosque schools: The Seventh Five-Year Plan envisioned that every child aged 5 and above would have access to either a primary school or a comparable, but less comprehensive, mosque school. Due to financial constraints, however, this goal was not achieved. Nevertheless, a board has been established to monitor and streamline the educational process in these institutions. This would enable the students of *madrassahs* to enter the mainstream of the public school system.

Promotion of female education: To increase access to and improve retention of girls in schools, various innovative actions have been launched. For example, Punjab offers stipends for girls enrolled in postprimary grades; life skills and skill development are encouraged for young girls in the educational setting, and so on.

6. CONCLUSION

Social justice involves a set of principles that guide us in giving to each what is due, both individually and collectively. The pivotal issue, however, is “what is due,” “to whom,” and “who decides.” The interpretation of social justice will differ depending on the context in which it is defined and implemented. For its optimal dispensation, social justice would require social institutions, justly organized, so as to provide access to what is “good” or desired. At the same time, social justice imposes upon us, individually and collectively, the responsibility to work with others to design and continuously perfect our institutions as tools for personal and social development.

Education and widening access to education are the most oft-recited mantras within and across countries. It is clear that wider access to and participation in education provides an effective means for effective participation

in societies in the twenty-first century. Education has long been considered a social responsibility, but in the world today, dominated as it by capitalism, the aim of education is captured in phrases such as “the need to develop human capital,” “to counter unemployment,” “to improve economic growth,” with slight emphasis in some cases on “creating a greater sense of well-being.” And yet it is clear that with increasing globalization and the fast pace of technological advances, the very countries that are lagging behind in education stand to be sidelined in the economic arena, thereby galvanizing poverty and greater social injustice for their populace. To speak of widening access to education as a matter of justice is deemed by some to be highly political. UNESCO is perhaps the only international organization that focuses on education as a social responsibility placed within the context of human rights (UNESCO, 2000). It is clear that once viewed through the prism of human rights, provision of access to and opportunity for education become matters of social conscience, be it international or national. Even if it is possible to pursue the cause of widening access effectively in other, more generally acceptable ways so as to avoid sidelining the issue of social justice, the question remains: should social justice be emphasized? Research in different regions and countries would be needed so as to provide workable answers for each specific context. It may be that in some contexts, talk of social justice might cause obstacles that would impair or render impossible its achievement and the widening of access to education.

In the foregoing we have focused on Pakistan as a context for education so as to clarify the prevailing atmosphere of social justice there. Given the country’s environment, the lack of will to implement education as a social justice or as a right is understandable, if regrettable. For developing countries such as Pakistan, it is clear that positive initiatives in education will stem from the rationale of capitalist gains. It remains to be determined whether countries that have moved from developing to become developed countries have subsequently come to view education as social justice. It is here in the globalized world that impact on education will see renewed vigor.

When Pakistan came into being in 1947, it was in accordance with the Muslim League’s explicit mandate to “protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Mussalmans (Muslims) of India” (Raza, 1997: iv). This assertion, especially its practical implications, is debated by various groups interested in the issue of Pakistani citizenship. Most important for the present chapter, however, is that it raises concerns among minority groups about social justice and equality in general and about education in particular. These concerns are compounded by disparities in access, opportunity, and participation, which in turn impact on educational status, social class (rich versus poor), area of residence (rural versus urban), and gender (male versus female) (Zia, 1998). The prevalence of elitism defined by feudalism and large

agricultural holdings creates a sharp contrast to have-nots, whom the public sector does not sufficiently provide with necessary basic social services (education, health care, sanitation, and drinkable water), and who cannot afford the same services as provided by the private sector. Given the low government allocations for the social sector and specifically for education (approximately 3% of the GNP) coupled with a high birth rate, it is safe to assume that universal primary education will remain an elusive target soon.

The world today, with its rapidly changing technologies and work environment, demands an equally responsive workforce. For such a workforce BE level is the minimum so that training and development can upgrade the skills to the needed advanced level within a reasonable period. Still battling with low literacy and primary education completion rates, Pakistan now also faces the task of providing access to diverse lifelong learning opportunities for all age groups to meet this challenge of changing economic and social conditions. In an increasingly globalized world, the challenge facing Pakistan thus is not only to provide universal access to primary education for its populace, but also access to higher levels of education, if it is to be a productive partner in the world community of nations.

The principle of participation is crucial, which means equal opportunity in gaining access to education (educational institutions in this case) as well as equality of opportunity to engage in productive work thereafter. It is obvious that the principle of participation does not and cannot guarantee equal results, but it requires that every person be guaranteed the human right of access to education. By definition, social justice in education would negate elitism, monopoly, exclusionary social barriers, and privileges in favor of any one person or group. In practice the above does not translate to reality in Pakistan. The four streams making up the country's educational system (public schools, private schools, nonformal, and religious schools) predetermine the economic justice that is meted out to graduates of each system.

Due to the dispensation of poor quality education, the public educational system is not considered a first choice for those who can pay the higher fees charged by private schools. Access to private schools thus becomes the privilege of the "haves," who by acquiring better quality education stand a greater chance of access to higher levels of education and also to the choicest employment opportunities (Zia, 1999: 120). Public schooling remains the fate of the majority, who cannot afford the costs of schooling. And then there are those who send their children to *maktabs* (religious schools providing primary level of education) and *madrassas* (religious schools providing secondary and higher levels of education), where the focus on religious education with nominal or no emphasis on modern day education tends to put them at a disadvantage in dealing with the rigors of modern life and living. Those who have been through NFE (mostly provided by NGOs) are unable

to get recognition or equivalence within the formal education structure. All this raises concerns about the practice of social justice in the country, specifically in the area of education. There is a need for serious attention to better regulation of education and its provision so that students have a nondiscriminatory and thus “level playing field.”

Despite assertions of compulsory and universal education, access in Pakistan remains a luxury of the few. Policy documents have mapped well-thought-out action plans, but a lack of political commitment, the centralization of authority, and an absence of public participation have repeatedly led to failure. With more children in and decreasing numbers of them out of school, a release of resources from the “numbers game” will result, which will facilitate in turn a focus on the quality of primary education in the public sector and create wider access to other levels of education (UIS, 2000: 16). For Pakistan the imminent challenge is to balance the issues of “quantity” and “quality” in education, specifically in primary education. Thus, “access” to education and “quality” both remain a priority.

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Chapter 19

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION: ADULT EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is tempting to think that there could be one right way to conceptualize the issue of widening access to education. However, access is complex and multifaceted, and if not understood as such, some injustices may arise when addressing this phenomenon. The debate on widening access to education turns on nothing less than equality, inclusion, and, most of all, fair distribution of and accessibility to educational resources and facilities. It calls for more supportive and welcoming educational systems that aim to impart critical skills for citizenship—that is, to produce beneficiaries who have the professional competences and attitudes that enable them to be resourceful and productive, first, locally, and then globally.

At first glance, the policies on widening access to education in Botswana appear fair and realistic. After all, no one would like to be subjected to inequalities, injustices, and unfairness. Yet on closer examination there are critical challenges that may turn the dream of achieving open access into a “painful” reality. In Botswana, as in many African nations, inequalities and differences feature in the social fabric. First, students come from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the grossly uneven management and distribution of resources between income groups from the rural and urban populations of the nation, the unequally resourced districts and town councils, and the disproportionate ratios of students in rural and urban schools suggest some tension with regard to widening access to education. These realities pose complex challenges to widening access. To be effective and make a real difference, the issue of widening access should be framed in social, economic, political, and legal goals.

The means by which such goals are to be achieved remain a complex challenge, however. Thus, in this chapter we discuss the challenges facing

Botswana, first, by providing educational profiles that will form a basis for discussing widening access to education. Secondly, we discuss policies that have been developed locally to encourage widening access together with some that enforce international conventions that Botswana has ratified—such as *Education for All* (EFA), the *Sixth Dakar Framework of Action Goals*, the *Millennium Goals*, and the *Hamburg Declaration* and the *Agenda for the Future*—so as to demonstrate the central role of these policies in the charting of a way forward for widening access, especially in the area of adult education. We then consider successes and failures in widening access. And we conclude by exploring ways of articulating new challenges for widening access within the wider sociopolitical, policy, and curricula-implementation contexts.

2. COUNTRY PROFILE

2.1 Geographic location and distribution

Botswana is landlocked. It is about 582,000 square kilometers in size. Given the country population of 1.7 million, “Botswana has a small population with a large resource base” (Presidential Task Force, 1997). This size places Botswana in a good position to provide adequately for its people in terms of education, health, and service provision.

Currently, the country is divided into districts and town councils. The demarcation into administrative districts was inherited from the colonial era. It marked the introduction of decentralization of authority, a policy introduced in 1904 by the colonial administrators to help to reach more people in different districts of Botswana. In addition, the districts have been divided into some subdistricts, which were made necessary by the geographical size of a district and the need for decentralization of district offices.

Almost half of the population lives in urban areas today, compared with 2% in 1960 (Presidential Task Force, 1997: 23), while the rest lives and works in the districts. The three old towns of Gaborone, Francistown, and Selebi-Phikwe now have population densities of over 1,000 persons per square kilometer (Republic of Botswana, Central Statistic Office, 2001). Many people migrate from rural areas to urban/town areas in search of higher quality of life and better-paid employment because industries and other development are concentrated in urban places. Thus, urban areas are overcrowded.

3. POPULATION TRENDS

The population is young, with about 36% aged 12–29 according to 1991 census estimates. Thus, an increasing proportion of the population falls into the “economically active group” (Presidential Task Force, 1997: 20). On the

other hand, “the elderly should be perceived as they truly are—a human resource of senior citizens who are the custodians of Botswana’s cultural wealth, values and wisdom as well as historical knowledge” (p. 20). Since the first national census, the population has been steadily increasing, though the recent HIV/AIDS figures threaten to reverse this trend (Republic of Botswana, Central Statistic Office, 2001).

3.1 Socioeconomic status and cultural tolerance

Botswana have much higher incomes than do citizens of some African nations. For example, “Botswana is expected to maintain an average annual growth rate of some 6% in real per capita incomes” (Presidential Task Force, 1997: 7). The overall growth rate of the economy is estimated at 8% per year during the next 20 years, which will accommodate a population growing at 2.1% (p. 7).

Despite the impressive per capita income projections, there are still a great many income inequities in Botswana. The proportion of Botswana living below the poverty level is about 47%. “This level is high compared to other countries in the world with a comparable per-capita income” (p. 24). The government has devised some policies on poverty alleviation, for example, the destitute and the newly introduced old-age pension schemes were designed to provide for people who do not earn wages in the formal employment sector.

Culturally, many Botswana live in a caring environment born of loyalty, dedication, and national pride (Presidential Task Force, 1997). The cultural environment makes individuals feel comfortable and is accepting of different ethnic groups. Irregular attitudes that do not conform to the acceptance of differences and diversity are frowned upon and challenged. The long-term *Vision 2016* stipulates that the “Botswana of the future will have citizens who are law abiding, strong in religious and spiritual values, and who possess high ethical values” (p. 12). It further states that no citizen of the future Botswana will be disadvantaged as a result of difference—for example, in gender, age, religion or creed, color, national or ethnic origin, location, language or political opinions (p. 12). Thus, by 2016, “the country will still possess a mix of cultures, languages, traditions, and people sharing a common destiny” (p. 13).

English and Setswana are the official languages. However, “Botswana contains a diversity of tribes with different languages that are not equally recognized with some signs of disunity and separateness” (p. 27). The country recognizes the potential problems that could be caused by the issue of different languages, and as a consequence *Vision 2016* states that every effort will be made to ensure that by 2016, “No Motswana [as the Botswana call themselves] will be disadvantaged in the education system as a result of a mother tongue that differs from the country’s two official languages” (Presidential Task Force, 1997).

3.2 Educational profile

Education in Botswana is still in the early stages of development. When the country gained independence from British colonial rule in 1966, education was neglected; the population was largely illiterate and the educational system was seriously underdeveloped. For example, “only about half of all primary school age children attended school, and there were only eight secondary schools, with an enrollment in 1966 of 1,531. There were no postsecondary schools” (Dodds and Youngman, 1994: 63).

Upon gaining independence, the few educated Batswana did not have the capacity to take Botswana to the desired level of development. The need for a wider access was high, and since independence, efforts have been made to open access. By 1996, school enrollment had risen to about 70% of people aged between 6 and 23, and adult literacy had risen to 67% from a level of 41% in 1970. Rapid educational expansion followed the country’s diamond boom of the 1980s (Republic of Botswana, 1994).

The expansion of school enrollments was accompanied by some problems. At almost all educational levels, disproportionately many students are in poor public schools; there has been a high rate of failure and school dropouts, especially in the remote and small settlements. This is the result of a poor supply of equipment and infrastructure to these areas, and in some cases long distances to be traveled by students. Overall, completion rates at primary school are relatively high, but they decrease when it comes to junior community secondary schools, and very few of the students who enter junior community secondary school have access to high schools. Further, the shrinking size of the college-age population is not uniform across the country. The real school dropout rate is much higher in rural areas than in urban areas since many children never reach high school. Particularly the college-going rate of young people in rural areas has dropped significantly in recent years. In view of this reality, the Presidential Task Force (1997) states that in the future “Botswana must be a society where there is equality of educational opportunity, and where no citizens are restricted to the circumstances of their birth” (p. 29).

Considered within the context of the new debate on widening access, the situation of schooling today poses multiple challenges to educators in Botswana. The issue of widening access thus calls for complex considerations—for example, it is necessary to restructure the school curricula, redefine priorities, and redistribute existing resources if the society is to update the old education system. Above all, this matter has to be addressed holistically, that is, access has to be considered in conjunction with the economic, sociocultural, and legal factors that impact on that process.

3.3 Trends in access to education

While a significant portion of the population of Botswana has access to education, within the debate of widening access, Botswana faces challenges, both locally and globally. At the local level, policies that have been formulated to widen access, such as establishing 10-year free but not compulsory education, fall short of achieving the right for every person to education proclaimed in the UDHR.

While we focus later in this chapter on adult education, it is first necessary to analyze policies on improving access to general education in Botswana. Although the analysis reflects a near universal access, there are problems that cannot be ignored, such as students who drop out of school because of life circumstances (e.g., poverty), the underdeveloped remote areas, conflicting cultural values, and lack of role models. Accordingly, a detailed profile of expansion of education is proposed here as a basis for showing the need for widening access in the area of adult basic education. We conclude the chapter by briefly suggesting ways to strengthen opportunities for wider access so as to make adult basic education a right for the adults who have missed opportunities or dropped out of school in their early years of life.

4. AN ANALYSIS OF ACCESS POLICIES IN BOTSWANA

The first National Commission on Education (NCE) was appointed in 1976 to review problems and prospects in the design and delivery of education in Botswana. The resulting report, the 1977 *Report of the National Commission on Education*, played a crucial role in improving and widening access to certain sectors of education (Republic of Botswana, 1977). While the report provided clear directions for formal education, it completely omitted the place and importance of nonformal education systems in Botswana. Because of this omission, this sector has always been neglected in the development activities. Coupled with some bottlenecks in the conventional education systems, that neglect has created a need to look closely into issues of widening access.

It was in the spirit of widening access to education that Botswana made a significant move towards free but not compulsory education up to junior secondary school level. The 10-year basic education potentially presents many opportunities to a number of Botswana. With the introduction of universal primary education (UPE) in 1977, primary schooling has recorded the highest levels of participation ever, with enrollment increasing from 83% in 1990 to a near universal rate of 98.6% in 1997. This was the result

of such measures as the abolition of school fees, the construction of more schools within reasonable walking distance, and the provision of school food programs (Republic of Botswana, Central Statistic Office, 2000, 2001). This notable expansion has continued to grow over the years, as indicated below.

The difference between population and enrollment gives an idea of how many children who should be in school are still not within the school system. As Table 19-1 indicates, the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) and the Net Enrollment Rate (NER) appeared to be increasing at a rate of about 1% per year. For example, the NER between 1997 and 2001 was 90.1%, which implied that only 9.9% of children within the ages 6–12 are not enrolled in formal school. Some 6-year-olds may be kept at home because parents do not feel they are old enough to start primary school, especially in rural areas. Or it may be that some children are at home because their parents simply do not want to send them to school.

The figures shown in Table 19-1 indicate near complete access to primary education. However, a critical analysis of the progression rate suggests relative decline because the numbers drop dramatically as students progress from lower to higher levels. For example, they dropped from 46,795 primary enrollments in 1990 to a mere 18,569 Form Five completers in 2001, which means that only 40% of those enrolled managed to reach Form Five in secondary school. This shows that 60% of the learners who enrolled in primary school in 1990 fell out of the system due to some known and unknown causes. Those who drop out of the system pose challenges. It is the responsibility of educators and policy-makers to question the educational fate of those who dropped out so as to pick them up again wherever they are and possibly provide them with adult basic education and functional skills. Figure 19-1 gives some of the reasons why students drop out of school.

Desertion seems to be the main reason for dropping out. Desertion is a complex phenomenon, which can result from a number of factors, such as poverty, parental inability to support children financially, and low self-esteem. All the reasons for dropping out deserve greater attention if policy-makers are to make steps towards achieving the goal of widening access for all children. Furthermore, by looking at the statistics for secondary school dropouts by reasons in 2000 and 2001 (see Figure 19-1), it becomes clear that similar problems persist. For example, desertion remains the main reason for dropping out, followed by pregnancy. This figure is frighteningly high given that Botswana is faced with very high HIV/AIDS infection rates.

Furthermore, the grossly uneven resources of the rural and urban places are well known. Students come from diverse backgrounds. Some come from poor families, dysfunctional families, or single female-headed families, and some have both poor parents living with them. On average, more children from low-income families are likely to drop out than children from

Table 19-1. Primary gross and net enrollments, 1995–2001.

Year	Population age 7–13	Population age 6–12	Total enrollment	Enrollment age 6–12	Enrollment age 7–13	GER 7–13	NER 7–13	GER 6–12	NER 6–12
1995	270,063	268,934	313,693	236,148	261,162	116.2	96.7	116.6	87.8
1996	271,298	270,324	318,629	239,368	265,708	117.4	97.9	117.9	88.5
1997	272,385	272,143	322,268	242,881	267,925	118.3	98.4	118.4	89.2
1998	273,585	274,113	321,271	245,738	269,912	117.4	98.7	117.2	89.6
1999	273,282	276,613	322,475	249,113	273,459	118.0	100.1	116.6	90.1
2000	274,763	280,001	324,283	252,349	275,165	118.0	100.1	115.8	90.1
2001	295,795	295,728	329,451	258,013	281,790	111.4	95.3	111.4	87.2

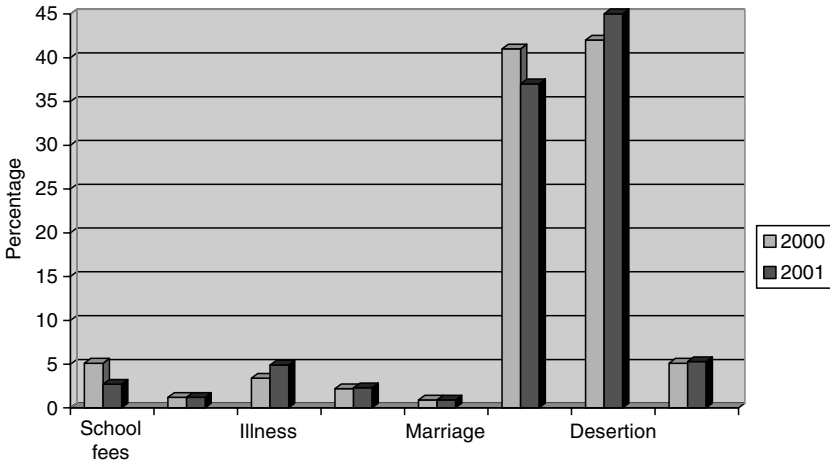


Figure 19-1. Secondary school dropout by reason, 2000–2001.

high-income families. Also, the dropout rate for learners attending public and government schools is likely to be higher compared to those attending better-resourced private schools. As the above table indicates, there may be many opportunities for children to enter schools, but their progress is seriously hampered by the aforementioned problems.

The other challenge facing the educational system involves demographic factors, such as the disproportional increase of pupils in schools relative to the number of available schools, the high ratios of students to teachers, and the shortage of educational infrastructure. It has to be noted that some classes are overcrowded, with well over 40 pupils in a single, small classroom. Something must be done to provide for the many people who wish to further their schooling and are actually pushed out because of circumstances beyond their control.

A further challenge for the educational system concerns the functionality of the type of education provided: what is taught in schools has to be linked with the practical realities of the majority of students. It is necessary to introduce more practical subjects to provide students with an awareness of the need to engage in self-employment and self-help activities. In other words, the systems need to be reoriented to prepare Botswana for the challenges posed by their realities and circumstances.

A further issue of special concern in these developments is legal in character. Basic education in Botswana is not compulsory. Universal education that does not have any legally enforceable basis may end up defeating the very access it is intended to widen. The statistics provided earlier in this chapter indicate that not all children of school-going age are in school. The

question is, “Where are these children, and what does the future hold for them?” The challenge for the country is thus to institute a legal mechanism that can help to ensure that all children eligible for school do attend, especially while government support is still available.

As the foregoing discussion indicates, Botswana still faces many challenges regarding the widening of access to education. This impacts on adulthood especially where the majority of adults are pushed out of school by circumstances beyond their control. Botswana’s government has acknowledged these challenges and has formulated policies that potentially will steer the country out of limited access. The Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE, 1994) and *Vision 2016: Towards Prosperity for All* (1997) document the recognition of the need to widen access to all Batswana. One way of widening access is through the provision of adult education.

5. POLICY FOR PROVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA

Botswana has already made considerable efforts to provide adult education through the provision of out-of-school education to both youths and adults. It offers learning opportunities outside mainstream schooling, which are designed to benefit those who lack basic education or wish to further their initial education (NCE, 1993). Its original task was to develop relevant education to help to transform Botswana from a predominantly agro-based economy to an industrial economy that could compete in the global market. The RNPE (1994) had the following adult learning objectives: (i) to ensure basic education and further education are relevant and available to a larger number of people, and (ii) to provide lifelong education to all sectors of the population. The policy has sections on out-of-school education, vocational education and training, and special education, which are relevant to the development of opportunities for adult learning. The policy clearly supports formal education, nonformal education, extension, and continuing and distance education for adult learners.

All these are in line with the national document *Vision 2016* (1997). The implementation of the RNPE therefore helped the nation realize the goals of *Vision 2016*. The publication of *Vision 2016* followed an extensive national consultative process to provide a framework for a national strategic planning and policy development process. In this document, the nation of Botswana is called upon to engage in transformation across a broad spectrum of social, economic, entrepreneurial, political, spiritual, and cultural concerns of all citizens. It envisions a situation in which there will be equal access to educational opportunities regardless of a person’s socioeconomic

status. The national policy on development and the role of education in it has recently been articulated in the *National Development Plan 9* (2003–2009), which incorporates aspects of *Vision 2016* and envisages that the development process should lead to the creation of an educated, informed, and prosperous nation, which is also productive, innovative, compassionate, and caring (MFDP, 2003). A whole chapter of the plan is devoted to education, and it identifies lifelong learning as a critical component of a national human resource development strategy. It gives an overview of the national educational policy framework and identifies projects to be implemented within this plan period to improve the quality of education in Botswana (MFDP, 2003). Consequently, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with other partners in education, developed policies, programs, and short-term projects in order to enhance adult learning opportunities.

In a renewed commitment to widening access and in support of international conventions, such as the *Dakar Framework for Action* goals identified at the World Education Forum, Botswana developed a *National Plan of Action* with clear targets assigned to different organizations to assist the nation to achieve its nationally defined goals of EFA. The plan focused on the expansion of education for vulnerable groups, improving the quality and relevance of adult education and training. It sought to explore ways to improve partnership in education, improve the provision of adult, basic, and continuing education for out-of-school youth and children and develop strategies to address gender disparities in education (MOE, 2003). This clearly was in response to the massive dropout rate, which characterizes the formal education system, especially in rural areas.

Botswana has also maximized its effort to expand the development of distance education. This chapter therefore argues that Botswana not only recognizes the limits of formal schools in providing access, but it also views learning as a basic human right, which should address the learning needs of children, youths, and adults equally. Learning is viewed as a lifelong process, which should assist citizens to address the nation's demographic, technical, economic, and political circumstances in the twenty-first century (Youngman, 2002b).

6. PROVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA

The policies for adult education in the Botswana context are based on the definition of adult education in the NCE (1993), which categorized adult education as follows:

- (i) *Adult basic education*: The provision of opportunities for all adults, namely out-of-school youth, women, and men to complete basic education (i.e., to the level of Grade 10-Junior Certificate).
- (ii) *Extension programs*: The provision of programs for young people and adults to develop new knowledge, attitudes, and techniques that would help to improve the quality of life in their homes and communities.
- (iii) *Continuing education*: The provision of opportunities to young people and adults who have successfully completed junior school to continue their education (and training) through part-time studies.

The conception of adult education has been concretized by specific recommendations for the implementation of activities that would enable government and other stakeholders to promote effectively lifelong learning in Botswana. Below is a brief discussion of the achievements and challenges of various institutions and government departments that provide adult education programs.

7. PROVIDERS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA

Adult education in Botswana is predominantly sponsored and controlled by the government and is treated as part of the national development effort intended to enable individuals to grow personally and to take part in the national development activities (Youngman, 2000). In spite of the influence of more recent international conferences, the RNPE remains the major policy guide for public and private education and national training institutions. It has enabled Botswana to provide adult education opportunities intended to address issues of access, gender equity, and the general improvement of the quality of education for women and minority groups (MOE, 2003). The state remains the primary provider of adult basic education with a steady increase in enrollment rates both in formal school and in nonformal and the distance education modes. As indicated below adult education provision also has some challenges and opportunities.

7.1 Adult basic education

Adult basic education is offered in the form of primers 1–5 roughly equivalent in standard or the curriculum taught in primary schools up to standard 7. It is provided as an extension of the literacy process provided by the government. Unfortunately, there are no data on adult enrollment in primary, junior secondary level, private and evening classes, but there is evidence of

a steady increase in adult enrollments for private secondary schools. The number of such schools has increased from 32 in 2001 to 48 registered private schools in 2002 (CSO, 2002).

7.2 Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning

Another significant provider of adult basic education is the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL). It offers courses through a distance learning mode. Historically, it used to be a unit under the Department of Nonformal Education of the Ministry of Education. The department was created as a semiautonomous institution by an Act of Parliament passed in December 1998; its establishment marked a turning point in the development of education in Botswana. It furthers equity in provision of education in line with the aspirations of *Vision 2016*, which stresses the need for every citizen to be accorded educational equality and that no one should be left out of education because of the circumstances of their birth. BOCODOL provides learning opportunities for individuals who for various reasons cannot or do not wish to attend formal school to attain the Junior Certificate qualification. Its current enrollments are impressive. For example, by 2001, about 2,000 learners had enrolled for the Junior Certificate (BOCODOL, 2002). These represent efforts to provide adult basic education at Grade 10 level for all through formal and distance education modes. Adult learning is facilitated by different agencies, such as ministries, districts, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and private organizations. This is compounded by the fact that in Botswana there is a chronic lack of systematic statistical documentation on adult learning experiences.

7.3 Adult literacy education

The Department of Nonformal Education of the Ministry of Education is responsible for providing adult literacy education through the Botswana National Literacy Program. It is the largest government-sponsored program of out-of-school education. Unfortunately, over the years, it has shown a steady decline in enrollment from 1997 to date as indicated in Table 19-2.

The problem is that this data do not distinguish between newly enrolled learners and those who enrolled in the previous year, which makes it difficult to determine the accurate figure for each year. However, since 1997, the program experienced a progressive decline in enrollments, which suggests that it could no longer attract new learners. The decline can also be attributed to the fact that the program uses primers that were developed in

Table 19-2. National literacy program—annual enrollment figures, 1997–2002.

1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
17,588	15,917	14,474	12,004	9,399	13,329

Source: Department of Nonformal Education (1997–2002).

the early 1980s without adapting them to the contexts of the learners (Maruatona, 2001). The apparent increase in enrollments during 2002 reflected the department's focus on workplace literacy activities in all parts of the country. There is no data on the literacy activities organized by NGOs in Botswana. Overall, it is extremely difficult to determine the statistics for adult literacy programs outside the government-operated literacy program. The only significant adult basic education and literacy provision outside the government is the one operated by the Debswana Mining Company, which has been offered since the 1970s. Since it started operations in 1971, the Debswana diamond mine in Orapa has run an adult basic education and literacy program based on materials used by the South Africa Bureau of Literacy and Literature. In 1998, Orapa mine introduced materials based on the South African Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) to their program. The materials are in both English and Setswana for different levels of learners. They cover such topics as basic survival and functional skills and introduction to computing. Adult basic education is not offered to mine employees who have not been to school or have a level of literacy below Grade 7 in primary schools. The program has been adapted to the Botswana context, and supervisors and learners are understood to be content with it (Youngman, 2002a).

The foregoing discussion highlighted the successes and challenges in the provision of adult literacy education in Botswana and represents national and private sector efforts to meet the themes of the *Hamburg Declaration* and the goals of EFA. The increase in the demand for adult basic education and workplace literacy signifies a growth in the recognition of the role of adult learning in different employment sites; it also demonstrates an increased recognition of the role of education for personal, community, and national development. The major challenge for this level of education is the need to counteract the consistently declining enrollment rates for adult literacy education and the failure for the literacy curricula to respond effectively to the needs of the learners.

7.4 Extension programs

The character of extension programs defies clear operational categorization and makes the articulation of the extension services complicated because they are offered by multiple stakeholders. Partly because of their amorphous

nature, they lack effective coordination. However, extension services have been an important element of the provision of adult education since Botswana gained independence because they have always been perceived to be essential for other rural development initiatives (MFDP, 2003). The Rural Extension Coordinating Committee (RECC), under the Rural Development Coordination Division (RDCCD) in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, is responsible for monitoring and coordinating extension programs. The RECC links with the districts and villages through District Extension Teams (DETs) and Village Extension Teams (VETs). It is currently estimated that there was one agricultural demonstrator for every 500 farming households, which is an acceptable distribution by any measure for a developing country. Extension work is also carried out by the Ministry of Health, which coordinates national health services country-wide. Its main strategy is health promotion and ill-health prevention. The ministry has a joint Primary Health Care Conduction Committee, which is responsible for coordinating the provision of adult learning activities on health matters. The committee provides information, trains members of village health committees, produces and distributes health education materials, and teaches expectant mothers at prenatal and postnatal clinics. The Botswana College of Agriculture (BCA) also provides farmers with courses tailored to the farmers' needs through the Denman Rural Training Centre and its satellite centers in Mahalapye, Francistown, and Maun.

During the 1980s Botswana made impressive strides in health mobilization and immunization, which then enabled it to attain universal child-immunization. However, these achievements in the enhancement of the population's health through extension education have been considerably eroded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV/AIDS is a major focus of current health education extension programs, such as the District Health teams.

In other areas of extension, since 1997 the Women's Affairs Department has organized several gender sensitization workshops for different ministries and held several refresher courses for the officers. The Consumer Protection and Education Unit of the Department of Consumer Affairs aims to protect consumers from unfair business practices and to educate the community about consumer rights and privileges. It disseminates information to enable consumers to acquire knowledge of basic consumer rights and obligations and implements several consumer education programs. The unit organized numerous workshops and seminars in schools, tertiary institutions, *Kgotla* (community meetings), business forums, and professional associations in Gaborone, Francistown, and Selebe-Phikwe, involving about 2,000 participants between January 2002 and June 2003 (Legwaila, 2003). The Ministry of Local Government also carries out adult learning activities through the Department of Social and Community Development, which is responsible for social welfare. The ministry also has the Remote

Areas Development Programme (RADP), which focuses on people living in the remote and arid areas of Botswana by providing them with extension services. These programs represent a limited effort considering the large number of people to be sensitized to gender issues in the civil service, the consumer population, and the health needs of the whole population, but the efforts reflect the desire to educate and empower adults in Botswana.

Adult education services are not confined to the government. Some NGOs provide adult learning opportunities. They address issues of rural development affecting disadvantaged groups, such as minority communities, women, children, youth and persons with disabilities. *Emang Basadi* is a women's association that organizes training on democracy, voter education, gender, and sensitization of the population on HIV/AIDS issues, and provides small-scale business skills for women (Emang Basadi, 2003). Other NGOs, such as the Kuru Development Trust, provide multiple practical skills, such as sewing, basketry, and craft making, to ethnic minorities. Recently, the Botswana Coalition of Nongovernmental Organizations (BOCONGO) organized training on the use of participatory methods for extension workers as part of the *National Plan of Action for Adult Learning* (Botswana National Commission for UNESCO, 1999). The Botswana Adult Education Association (BAEA) also organized numerous adult learning activities, such as the Adult Learners' Week and the Week of the Elderly celebrations in 2001–2002. These are part of the activities suggested by the *Hamburg Declaration* and represent international efforts to give adults increased access to learning opportunities in places where they normally would not gain admission because of stringent requirements. Unfortunately, the BAEA is currently losing its momentum and needs to be revitalized. NGOs are now largely focused on organizing sensitization workshops on HIV/AIDS, providing leadership training, and training communities on the management of natural resources (Adekanmbi and Modise, 2000).

Extension programs have played a major role in the provision of adult learning in Botswana since 1997. These activities furthered the Hamburg goals because they related what was learned to the empowerment of women and minority communities. They also exposed extension staff to skills that improved their productivity. Some helped learners acquire skills to fight poverty and thereby achieve one of the major *Millennium Goals*, namely poverty reduction. The government remains the major sponsor of extension programs, but NGOs also play a pivotal role in instances where government services are limited. Extension services provide opportunities to empower women and to learn so as to adjust to the world of work. They provide for groups with special needs and those in remote areas of Botswana. However, a major challenge is the quality of these programs and their relevance to learners' needs. There is no conclusive evidence that the extension of adult learning activities respond to the needs of individuals, minorities, and their

communities; the programs are generic and not targeted at specific needs (Lekoko, 2002). Extension programs still systemically exclude most groups who are supposed to be served through state programs in rural areas. In some cases NGOs fill the gap. Over all, state-organized learning opportunities provided by extension programs fail to stimulate minority learners to meet their educational needs and achieve their full potential.

7.5 Continuing education

The third aspect of adult education provision is continuing education. In this context, “continuing education” refers to planned formal and nonformal educational programs for adults who intend to continue their education beyond the basic level of Grade 10 (Junior Certificate). It is viewed as an aspect of lifelong learning. Continuing education is offered, for example, by BOCODOL and the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Botswana. The 1993 *Report of the National Commission on Education* identified the two as the leading institutions in the provision of continuing and distance education. Since its inception in 1998, BOCODOL has provided distance education courses for senior secondary education and has five centers around the country, which enabled it to enroll 2,500 learners in 2002. This represents a significant increase in learner enrollment outside formal school education. In addition, there has been a massive expansion of private educational training institutions from the mid-1990s on. This suggests an increase in the demand for the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) qualification, awarded after Grade 12.

The demand for continuing education has also been expanding in the areas of tertiary and professional training. The Extra-Mural Unit of the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) at the University of Botswana grew from an enrollment of 1,779 participants who enrolled for the Certificate and Diploma in Accounting and Business Studies in 1998–1999 to 2,202 students in 1999–2000. This represented a 15% increase in enrollments, which is one-fifth of the total university student population. It also offered a number of “improve your business and start your business” noncredit courses in conjunction with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. At the same time, the unit organized a regional noncredit short course on “gender and development” to 15 participants from Africa and the United States (CCE, 2000). The Distance Education Unit has provided a Certificate in Adult Education for several years, which has now been replaced by a Diploma in Adult Education through a distance learning mode. The unit also administers a Diploma in Primary Education program, which serves 6,000 teachers countrywide. In addition, the unit has organized public awareness courses, public lectures on a number of issues, such as crime prevention and HIV/AIDS, and an awareness course on the patient’s bill of

rights in Botswana hospital services (Adekanmbi and Modise, 2000). In spite of the phenomenal increase in enrollment, there is clearly an unmet demand for tertiary and professional training in Botswana. For example, the BCA established a Centre for In-service and Continuing Education (CICE), which aims to provide short and continuing education courses on agriculture and also to develop and publicize materials on agricultural extension activities in Botswana. Continuing education therefore remains the most significant way to help learners adjust to the changing world of work. It clearly shows that learners view adult learning as a significant investment in their future career prospects.

The provision of adult learning is confronted with massive challenges when it comes to resource mobilization because it has always competed unfavorably with formal education in spite of the latter's inadequacies in widening access to education. Adult basic education attracts marginalized groups, such as women and the indigenous people, out-of-school youths, and individuals from very poor households (MOE, 1993). The government allocates a disproportionately small figure of 1.1% of the recurrent budget of the Ministry of Education to literacy education (Youngman, 2002a). In spite of the financial challenges, the state expects adult learning to contribute to national goals, such as self-reliance and social development. It could be argued that the demand for adult education is steadily expanding, but a government reduction in funding for adult basic education is envisaged as a result of an expected policy change that seeks to introduce cost-recovery and cost-sharing measures. Consequently, the government's move towards reducing expenditures on basic education in the face of growing HIV/AIDS infections represents an irresolute commitment to widening access and the provision of education for all.

However, there is a considerable will to spend money on continuing education on the part of the learners and their employers. For example, some private sector institutions such as banks provide internal training for their employees. They are also willing to reimburse their employees for money they spend on their studies, such as for the Certificate or Diploma in Accounting and Business Studies by distance education. In this way employers contribute to their employees' adult learning opportunities. The government continues to invest sizeable resources for those who already had a chance, such as short-term senior staff computer training courses, which are expected to improve the staff's productivity and working conditions.

However, given the available information, it is not easy to judge whether the expenditures on adult learning in all the sectors just discussed have been sufficient. Thus the anticipated decision by the government to implement cost-sharing and cost-recovery measures in all sectors of education would not promote public investment in adult learning and it also somewhat defies the principle of access to education for all as a human right.

8. NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WIDENING ACCESS TO ADULT EDUCATION

Botswana strives to improve its delivery of adult learning opportunities in keeping with the principles of the *Agenda for the Future* and the *Dakar Framework for Action*. Its national strategic plans are synchronized with these international frameworks for action. Government departments' and districts' development plans are incorporated as part of the educational chapter in the *National Development Plan 9* (2003–2009). Chapter 15 of the plan is devoted to “education and training” and emphasizes the need to equip learners with skills to enable them to engage in self-employment as well as to create an opportunity for lifelong learning.

It is anticipated that the formulation of the *National Development Plan 10* (2010–2015) will be driven primarily by the country's analysis of its achievements and the remaining challenges in the fulfillment of the requirements for the attainment of the *National Plan of Action for Education for All*, which is currently being implemented through the *National Development Plan 9*. This section provides an analysis of the remaining challenges facing the provision of adult learning and suggests ways forward that promise to enhance access to adult education.

8.1 Adult basic education

The most significant challenge in this area is to relate the adult basic education curriculum to the world of work. Plans are underway for the government to introduce computers and other technical skills that are essential in all junior secondary schools to help to adapt learners to the future world of work. BOCODOL also expects to enroll more learners in its vocational skills section and strengthen its support services for junior certificate learners (MFDP, 2003). This is in line with Botswana *Vision 2016* regarding the extension of adult basic education to all adults.

However, the challenge at this level is that the state finds the cost of free school education unsustainable and is planning to introduce cost-sharing and cost-recovery measures. The problem with such measures is that there is no assurance that no one will be excluded based on the economic circumstances of their parents. It is assumed that with a strengthened social welfare system, children of the poor will not be excluded. However, experience has shown that even with free education, poor children were frequently sent home from school on the grounds that their parents had failed to pay development fees in secondary school and/or uniforms in primary schools (Maruatona, 2003). The nation is likely to lose most of the gains

made through the provision of free education during the 1980s and 1990s if it introduces the aforementioned measures. The best approach would be for government to continue providing access to free education to all citizens in order to reduce exclusion of the poor.

8.2 Extension programs

One of the urgent challenges for extension programs is to educate rural communities to attain the goal of sustainable rural livelihoods, as well as land and natural resources management. The RDCD developed a program for training Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) practitioners as a way of helping extension officers to reach the communities. The most pressing challenge is to make agriculture more attractive to the youth, who are the most unemployed population group in the nation. The improvement in the delivery of extension services will be achieved only by strengthening and unifying the coordination of the extension system. One of the future foci of the RDCD is to alleviate poverty, which is a key area for the *Millennium Goals*. This suggests that, since the World Summit, Botswana has made poverty alleviation a priority. A Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), intended to help the government understand the magnitude of poverty, has recently been conducted and its results are being analyzed. The RDCD realized that poverty reduction cannot succeed without a deliberate effort. In this regard, the division has been developing a National Poverty Reduction Strategy for Botswana. The challenge for extension is to increase the capacity of the rural communities to maximize their control and use of natural resources.

8.3 Continuing education

The Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Botswana remains a centerpiece in ensuring that nontraditional students and professionals gain access to university education and qualifications through its off-campus services. As indicated above, the BOCODOL continuing education program also stands out as an exemplary practice for the attainment of the BGCSE through a distance learning mode. What remains to be done is to develop materials for self-study and expand the access to and use of technologies for independent study. Thus, in its strategic plan 2003–2006, BOCODOL plans to focus on self-study materials and technologies that would enable learners to work and progress at a pace that depends on each learner's performance. It also plans to collaborate with other distance learning institutions to develop appropriate programs and put in place assessment procedures that will make their qualifications acceptable nationally and

internationally. They will have to target the provision of applied skills and competencies that would enhance the productivity of the participants and affect their work performance. This would make learning an investment and bring it closer to the changing world of work, thereby furthering the goals of *Vision 2016*. Therefore, continuing education stands to enable citizens to gain access to learning through alternative educational experiences. In addition, there are other opportunities that cut across the practice of adult education, which if addressed would have a profound effect on the future of adult learning in Botswana. These include establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and improving the shared use and coordination of educational resources.

9. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The government, in collaboration with other stakeholders, is working to establish a unifying umbrella assessment body in the form of an NQF. Teams composed of different stakeholders have been dispatched to different countries in Africa and abroad to study qualification frameworks. The end result should be the development of nationally approved qualifications, which would validate prior learning and authenticate experiential learning within the overall framework of a national accreditation system in order to serve various learning centers for youth and adult learners all over the country (Youngman, 2002b). The framework would facilitate learner mobility within different sectors of education and training. This would be a significant move towards achieving the principles of lifelong learning, which inform educational planning in Botswana. It would also give credence and recognition to the experiential learning-based outcomes. While these efforts are at a preliminary stage, they point up the necessity of the government, NGOs, and the private sector to provide high-quality education. It is anticipated that the outcomes of implementing the NQF would enhance learners' economic development because it would lead to the passing of legislation requiring employers to recognize certified experiences of their employees. It would also help to relate course content/curriculum to the real life situation of adult learners.

10. SHARING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The RNPE from 1994 stipulated that there should be a shared use of resources by different institutions. For example, it recommended an extended use of schools by adults attending evening classes, as well as that

local resources should be shared beyond the Ministry of Education to include other public sector institutions, such as libraries, the private sector (i.e., company training institutions), community-based organizations, and civil society institutions (e.g., churches). The underlying concept is to enable citizens of Botswana to access face-to-face learning throughout their lives (Youngman, 2002b). The shared use of resources can work as long as the government, NGOs, and the private sector have a common understanding of standards. Closely related to the need for the sharing of limited resources is the country's plan to enhance its capacity to coordinate policy initiatives across different sectors. The RNPE recommended the establishment of a specialist subcommittee of the National Council on Education for Out-of-school Education. Established in 1999, it has since been playing a leading role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the RNPE on out-of-school education. The sharing of resources and strengthening of the coordination of the RNPE activities is a critical addition to national efforts to achieve *Vision 2016* and *Botswana's National Plan of Action for Education for All*.

11. CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored opportunities for and challenges to widening access to education in Botswana, paying special attention to the field of adult education. We began with a broad overview of issues surrounding widening access to show opportunities and challenges facing the country with regard to widening access. We then looked at the current policy on access, focusing mainly on the 10-year basic but not compulsory education. This policy potentially presents opportunities for many Botswana to enter schools. However, what is evident from the experiences as indicated in the statistics is that this policy, which also receives notable financial support (free school fees) from the government, makes it possible for students from all backgrounds to enter schools without promising them continued school support. The statistics provided clearly indicate that education in Botswana reflects the social problems of inequality, limited access, poor institutional infrastructures, and weak support frameworks. The statistics reinforced our argument here that while at first glance it seems that there is near universal access to basic education in Botswana, the contrary may in fact be the case: the educational system opens doors to the majority of Botswana to enroll but then fails to retain them. The figures presented above make it clear that approximately half of the students who enroll in the first grade fail to climb the education ladder. They are dropped along the way, creating a pool of potential learners for adult basic education.

We have proposed a number of reasons for dropping out. Students from less affluent families are more vulnerable in comparison to students born into well-off families. Some students from poor families cannot afford a meal before coming to school and/or after school. To provide for these disadvantaged groups, policies should address the life experiences and circumstances of different individuals. Widening access alone cannot do much to redress these imbalances and inequalities, which stand in the way of some students' progress. Sound policies informed by the economic, social, political, and legal context of issues surrounding widening access are needed. The "one size fits all" policies cannot work well for this multifaceted phenomenon of widening access. The policy of universal education, whose focus is just access and which does not look holistically at the circumstances of all students, has some shortfalls. It pushes out some students who undoubtedly, as demonstrated by high numbers of enrollment, are interested in being educated.

Particularly striking is that there are opportunities in Botswana for widening access. So, for example, the government, if willing, can continue to assist its citizens financially in getting an education. Thus, economically speaking, the government is in a good position to support children from poor families. The expansion of the 1980s, which has been and continues to be demonstrated in the schools, was not an accident; rather, it came about as the result of the diamond boom, and Botswana still enjoys this wealth.

The issue of widening access is fundamentally a matter of social justice; education is a right that should be attended to with zeal, commitment, and fairness. Were this trend towards wider access to be strengthened, legal protection for children who are denied access by circumstances beyond their control should be put in place. This, then, is the challenge for the government: to devise means of making access a true reality for all Botswana. As *Vision 2016*, the long-term vision for Botswana, states, no person should be disadvantaged. Education should be a right for all and access should be widened through all forms of education. Adult education should play a major role in this.

Botswana has an elaborate policy framework, such as has been articulated in the *Revised National Policy on Education, Vision 2016*, and the *National Development Plans*, which enables the country to enhance access to adult education in all its forms and content. It has policies on adult basic education, extension programs, and continuing education, which can enable the government and other stakeholders to provide these services. These policies have helped to increase adult education opportunities, thus making a significant move towards the achievement of an educated and informed nation. However, this achievement is threatened by a number of challenges and problems. The major challenge is the recent government's intention to introduce cost-sharing and cost-recovery majors in education. Should the

government's intentions materialize, Botswana will witness a growing number of its young citizens on the street, and enrollment in some schools will drop drastically. Many people in Botswana are still poor and they cannot be expected to pay for their own tuition.

In the area of extension education, the Government of Botswana has introduced measures such as the participatory approaches to increase participation of local residents. However, it still has to be determined how this kind of training influences the quality of extension agents as adult educators. On the other hand, continuing education offers an alternative mode of certification for senior secondary and tertiary education teachers. All these forms of education help Botswana address issues of access and increased enrollment in education.

Although the future targets for widening access seem to be in place, they may not serve their purposes if resources are not allocated to ensure that such action plans are implemented. It is hoped that the country's economic soundness will enable the government to overcome the challenges and constraints to widening access. With sound policies developed in view of the prevailing social, cultural, political, and economic realities of Botswana, the government should be able to realize its dream of providing education to all Botswana by 2016.

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Chapter 20

ACCESS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES: THE EFFECTS OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC FINANCE POLICIES

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The globalization of higher education has been ushered in with conservative public finance policies that use tuition and loans as means of shifting the burden of funding colleges from taxpayers to students and their families (Henry et al., 2001). While there have been critical analyses of these policies illuminating the unintended equity effects (Henry et al., 2001; St. John, 2003) along with literature that espouses the benefits of these shifts (King, 1999), fewer analyses have provided balanced appraisals of the intended and unintended consequences of these new policies. Yet balanced appraisals are precisely what are needed if our goal is to inform the reconstruction of public finance policies in ways that are just for all citizens, taxpayers as well as students and their families.

In this chapter we examine patterns of policy change in education and public finance in the United States in an effort to untangle the effects of federal and state policies on educational outcomes. In Section 1 we briefly review the education policy context in the United States and then describe the framework we used to assess the effects of public finance policies on educational opportunity. In Section 2 we examine changes in key outcomes in relation to policy shifts in federal financing of higher education in the United States during the late twentieth century. We conclude by considering the implications for global studies of postsecondary access.

1. BACKGROUND

It is apparent from recent reviews that public finance policies for education and social services in the United States and other developed democracies have moved towards privatization of these services, a development related

to conservative social and economic arguments (Huber and Stephens, 2001; Teaford, 2002). The shift in higher education funding—from low or no tuition with high public subsidies to high tuition with low public subsidies for colleges and universities—has resulted in lower taxpayer costs per student enrolled in college (St. John, 2003). The rationales used for accountability make arguments about improving quality-related outcomes and efficiency. However, the new policies are seldom evaluated relative to the claims used in their rationales. Therefore, it is difficult to move beyond the ideologically centered discussions of this privatization strategy. The policy context in the United States is described below before introducing the justice-centered lens used in the study.

1.1 The US policy context

Education in the United States is a responsibility of state governments rather than the federal government. In most other nations the central government plays a more substantial role in funding both K-12 and higher education. However, in the United States the federal government now uses the threat of withdrawing federal funds from public schools and college students as a means of shaping and influencing state and institutional education policy. The policy mechanisms used by the federal government are very different for K-12 education (elementary, middle, and high schools) than for higher education, but in both cases the use of threats to withdraw funding has been driven by the ideology of the political right which dominates federal education policy.

1.1.1 Structural aspects of the US system

Since the educational excellence movement was initiated, after publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), most states have developed tightly regulated education environments with a strong emphasis on testing. This approach has been encouraged by federal policies, including the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. The federal government can withhold funding for federal programs (e.g., special education and compensatory education programs that provide supplemental funding for high need students) if states do not have standards and testing programs the federal government considers acceptable. To understand the power of the threat to withdraw federal funding for schools, it is important to understand the two major areas of federal funding.

Special education is one of the two major areas of federal funding. The federal government provides funds for students who have limited capacity to learn and a complex structure of assessment tests used for special-needs

students. Individual education plans (IEPs) are required, which means that schools must develop a “contract” with parents to provide services so their children can receive special support, either in the “mainstream” or regular classrooms, and/or in classrooms comprised of special-needs students. Most special-needs students have learning disabilities of some type, but there are also programs for gifted children using IEPs and “pullout” instruction in special classes. While NCLB and other federal legislation do not threaten to withdraw funding for special education, the imposition of standards and testing has changed education for special-needs students. For example, the implementation of examinations for high school graduates has reduced the percentage of special-needs students who complete high school in some states (MacMillan et al., 1990; Manset-Williamson and Washburn, 2002).

Federal compensatory education programs provide supplemental financial resources for schools that serve high percentages of students from low-income families. These programs are referred to commonly as “Title I” because they are authorized under Title I in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by NCLB and other reauthorizations of the ESEA. Historically, Title I supported pullout programs in reading and math for students who were behind in their course work. Over time Title I funding has also supported supplemental instruction in classrooms and special funding for low-performing schools to implement different types of school reform, a program known as Comprehensive School Reform (Wong, 2003). For the first time since the enactment of NCLB, the federal government has legislated that it will withdraw Title I funds from low-performing schools if they do not improve their scores. The threat is to turn these funds into vouchers that students can use to purchase services through alternate public schools or private providers. This threat is a very real challenge for American education. Public schools face a complicated transition from heavy regulation to incentives for market approaches.

In higher education, the opposite direction of transition in the federal role is being debated, from providing market incentives to using threats and heavy regulation. The Higher Education Act (HEA), first authorized in 1965, provides market incentives through the loans and grant programs authorized under Title IV (HEA, 1965). Recently proposed federal legislation preauthorizing the HEA would require colleges and universities to maintain specified rates of degree completion in order to receive continued funding under “campus-based” federal aid programs. Campus-based grant, loan, and work-study programs are administered through campus offices. The largest federal grant (Pell) and loan programs are administered by the federal government.

If combined federal and state student financial aid is already not adequate to ensure postsecondary opportunity for low-income students—an

issue we examine in this chapter—then the threat to withdraw funds from campus-based programs would apply primarily to colleges that serve low-income students. It now appears that pending reauthorization of the HEA will be delayed a year because of the 2004 presidential election, coupled with concerns about low-income affordability raised in *Access Denied*, a report by a congressional panel (ACSFA, 2001).

The public debates about access in the United States are complicated by rising prices for education. Historically, states funded public colleges and universities and they charged modest tuition. However, since the early 1980s the tuition charges by public colleges have increased substantially as most states have bought into the new market rationale (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). Starting in 1965 the federal government provided student need-based grants for low-income students to equalize the opportunity for college enrollment for students admitted based on qualifications. The legislative intent of Title IV of the HEA, which authorized the major federal grant programs, was to promote equal educational opportunity to enroll and persist in colleges of choice.

However, after 1980 the federal government began to cut federal grant programs and to increase loan programs, using loans as the primary means of subsidizing access for low- and middle-income students. Although there have been some modifications in federal loan programs over time, the HEA programs do not have meaningful income-contingent repayment schemes. Students must repay the entire amount due, plus interest, regardless of income. This feature is unlike some of the newer national loan schemes, such as the noteworthy loan program in Australia (Lleras, 2004). In addition, loan limits, originally set to protect low-income students, now often mean students have substantial unmet need after receiving their loans (ACSFA, 2002). Thus, the shift to loans has denied access to some low-income students if they do not receive some merit scholarships or state grants on top of their need-based federal grants. And only about five of the American states provide adequate grant aid to equalize access for low-income students (St. John et al., 2004a).

1.1.2 Ideological conflict

The movement towards accountability and market incentives has taken different forms in higher education and K-12 education and has been influenced by an ideological shift in education policy. The socially progressive beliefs that led to the creation of public education by states in the late 1800s also had a substantial influence on the creation of a federal role in education in the 1960s, resulting in passage of the HEA and the ESEA. Between 1965 and 1980 these federal laws emphasized equal educational opportunity as their primary rationale. While the legislated intent for these

programs has not changed—enabling legislation still emphasizes the equal opportunity goal—the programs have been reshaped in ways that promote other goals.

Two new goals seem central to the new emphasis on accountability and market mechanisms in education policy. One relates to an implicit intent of promoting education quality for “all” students, rather than emphasizing equal opportunity across income groups. The goal of improving the quality of education, pervasive in the United States since publication of *A Nation at Risk*, has focused on the quality of education for all students through raising standards. This approach provided a different rationale for public funding, one that shifted how policies were implemented. The second goal, to reduce taxpayer costs, was embedded in the shift from grants to loans for funding access to higher education. The emergence of these new goals changed the logical basis needed to evaluate the effects of education policy. Since our focus in this chapter is on the opportunity to enroll in college, we need to consider all three concerns—the basic opportunity for a quality education, equal opportunity for students with low incomes, and taxpayer costs.

1.1.3 Justice as a lens

Economic theories are difficult to use as a basis for appraising the consequences of public finance policies because they lack a basis for balancing the interests of different groups, if not for building an understanding of the public interest in higher education finance (St. John, 2003). An alternative is to use John Rawls’s principles of justice (1971, 2001) as a basis for assessing the effects of public policy. Rawls’s concept of basic rights has been widely discussed in the international literature on development and has many proponents, including some who argue that the list of rights should be extended (Nussbaum, 1999; Sen, 1999). In addition, Rawls’s work has been appropriately criticized because it lacks a human or behavioral dimension with respect to the dominant good (Walzer, 1983; Wolfe, 1989; Van der Veen, 1999). However, Rawls’s principles of justice have received less attention in the literature on public finance policy, in spite of their potential utility in choosing appropriate measures of outcomes to inform judgments in that sphere. Three principles from Rawls’s theory merit consideration, at least in the US policy context.

1.2 Rawls’s principles in the US policy context

Rawls’s two principles of justice have received a great deal of attention and can inform our understanding of education policy. As recently restated (Rawls, 2001: 42–43), the two principles are:

- (a) Each person has the same infeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all.
- (b) Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: first, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle).

As is evident in the brief review of the US policy context above, the initial locus of federal policy in education related to the difference principle focused on the goal of ensuring that the least-advantaged had equal opportunity to benefit. The ESEA program did this by providing additional funding and services for the least-advantaged—those who were least-advantaged economically and educationally. The compensatory education programs and special education programs provided extra funding for students meeting this need. And the federal student aid programs authorized through the HEA were initially focused on low-income students.

In addition, affirmative action policies that considered race as a criterion in college admission related to the second goal. There has been a great deal of literature defending this type of policy (e.g., Bowen and Bok, 1998). And two recent United States Supreme Court decisions (US Supreme Court, 2003a,b) mean that some forms of affirmative action in college admissions will remain legal for another quarter century. However, securing admissions to a US college—that is, qualifying for admission—does not ensure financial access. Many low-income students do not have the financial means to attend, especially in 4-year colleges (ACSFA, 2001, 2002). Financial aid was and remains necessary for low-income students who qualify for college admission, but changes in aid policies threaten financial access for students who are qualified to enroll.

However, the newer rationales for accountability and market models appeal more directly to basic rights, or Rawls's first principle. In K-12 education the emphasis on raising standards and accountability shifted attention in national education policy away from the equalizing role of government and towards the basic right for a quality education. All of the efforts to impose accountability relate to the rationalizing of education based on the notion that all have the equal right, or the first principle of justice.

This logic about equal rights for all has been embedded in the official policy reports that the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has routinely published. These reports claim that all students who qualify for college have the right to attend (e.g., NCES, 1997a,b, 2001). Before many of the research reports are released by NCES, they are extensively reviewed

within the government and a request is made that the agency be cited as author rather than the writers of the reports. One such report went so far as to make the following claim in the executive summary about equal opportunity to enroll (NCES, 1997a: iii):

Although there are differences by income and race-ethnicity in the four-year college enrollment rates of college-qualified high school graduates, the difference between college-qualified low-income and middle-income students, as well as the differences among college-qualified black, Hispanic, Asian, and White students, are eliminated among those students who have taken the college entrance examinations and completed an application for admission, the two steps necessary to attend a four-year college.

These conclusions led to several reanalyses of the data. The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (ACSFA, 2002) examined the tables in the report and reached the opposite conclusion from the statistics in the report. The ACSFA concluded that, under current policies, 4 million low- and middle-income children would be denied the opportunity to enroll in 4-year colleges each decade due to finances. Another researcher went back to the federal database, reanalyzed it, and confirmed that a large number of qualified low-income students—students with the right courses in high school, good grades, and high test scores—were academically able to enroll in college (Lee, 2004). So how could this data have been interpreted so differently in different federal reports?

Part of the answer is that the NCES studies made serious statistical errors. Heller (2004a) examined four of their reports and found a pattern of sampling errors and analysis errors. Becker (2004), one of the nation's leading education economists, followed up with a further review that pointed to both bias and errors. So there is little doubt that this research was deceptive (Fitzgerald, 2004); perhaps an effort was made to claim equal opportunity existed when the data did not support the conclusion.

A closer review of the first report in this series (NCES, 1997a) reveals that the standard of equal access was based on a false premise. Consider the following definition in the original report in this series of analyses by the NCES (1997a: 1–2):

If the financial aid system is providing equal educational opportunities and access to postsecondary schooling, one would expect no substantial differences by family income in the four-year college enrolment rates of students whose academic records show they are likely to be admitted to a four-year college and who have taken the necessary steps to be considered for admission. The findings of this study indicate that this is indeed generally the case: there were no substantial differences by

family income in the four-year college enrolment rates of college-qualified high school graduates who apply to and are accepted for admission at four-year colleges.

This definition clearly indicates that access is equal among those who apply for and go to college, but does not consider why qualified students do not apply or whether finances could have inhibited application, access, and preparation. Nevertheless, this type of report communicates that higher education is a right, or liberty, for all who qualify. The reports miss the fact that many low- and middle-income students qualify but do not even apply because they know they cannot afford to enroll. The language of equal rights has been systematically used to hide bias and espouse equal opportunity when it does not exist in US higher education.

Certainly the definition of academic access to higher education must place the responsibility for admission within the institutions, but not all admitted students have equal rights to enroll if they are admitted. Admitted students who can afford to pay the costs of continuous enrollment can be considered to have financial access. The NCES reports have been building a rationale of access as a right for those who prepare, but have overlooked the equal rights aspect of this claim.

Another principle noted by Rawls (1971, 2001) merits our attention as well, the *just saving* principle. In its most recent formulation, the principle reads as follows (Rawls, 2001: 159):

The principle of just saving holds between generations, while the difference principle holds within generations. Real saving is required only for reasons of justice: that is, to make possible the conditions needed to establish and to preserve a just basic structure over time.

This statement clearly communicates that the difference principle should have the priority for public funding. Funding for structures that promote the basic right, we are told, should be rationalized on a cross-generational basis, each generation helping the next through taxpayer support. However, the within-generational aspect of the just saving principle indicates that a society should emphasize equal opportunity and that this has merit and can be rationalized within generations, a higher standard for public spending.

This distinction is important because the change in rationales for education programs in the United States has been based on appeals to basic rights. Clearly it is easier to reduce funding if public investment is rationalized based on equal rights (principle 1). Particularly in higher education, public spending is hard to rationalize as a basic right because the individual benefits. If access is truly equal, as the NCES quotes reviewed above indicate, reductions in costs may seem reasonable. However, if inequalities are created by reduced spending, it is appropriately judged to be injustice.

1.2.1 Access and equal opportunity

It is appropriate to assume that, in the US policy context, students who take the steps to prepare for college should have the basic right to attend college, if qualified for admission, rather than be denied access based on their financial ability to pay. In particular, it is possible to argue that equally qualified students should have the same rights to academic access, to be admitted to college using the same admissions criteria. Affirmative action remains an important aspect of college admissions (Bowen and Bok, 1998) and is still legal, if appropriate criteria are used in the admission decision (US Supreme Court, 2003a,b). The college admissions community has long argued for just such an equity standard. Therefore, we can appropriately consider the right to *academic access* for students who are equally prepared as a basic liberty: students admitted to colleges, or at least to public colleges and universities, should have equal opportunity to enroll. Admissions decisions, while a responsibility of campuses, should be fair and just.

The second principle relates more directly to the concept of *financial access*, whether students who meet the same access criterion have the same opportunity to attend and can afford continued enrollment. This definition relates more directly to Rawls's second principle. Need-based student aid programs ensure financial access, while merit programs either encourage students to prepare or reward excellent students. In the United States, colleges and universities usually award aid based on both merit and need. Only the most prestigious colleges can afford to have need-blind admissions and meet financial need because they attract so many highly qualified applicants. Therefore, states and the federal government have responsibility for ensuring financial access.

In the US context, then, *equal opportunity* relates to academic access through the process of fair and equal opportunity to gain admission and financial access through fair and equal opportunity to pay for college if admitted. The admissions aspect of equal opportunity is a responsibility of college admissions, while the financial aspect is a government responsibility, as established in the United States Constitution's equal protection clause, which guarantees all citizens equal treatment under the laws of the United States.

Therefore we can consider the basic right to academic access as being related to merit, earned as a part of elementary and secondary education. Students with equal preparation deserve equal opportunity for admission. Further, colleges appropriately retain freedom to adjust their admissions criteria to ensure fairness. If high schools were equal for all students, there would not be inequality in the opportunity to prepare for college. This ideal standard for the basic right is not typically met in practice. Instead, there are inequalities in schools in the United States, especially in urban and rural locales compared to the suburbs (Orfield and Eaton, 1996; Haycock,

1998; Brennan et al., 2001; Gándara, 2002). In reality we need an intervening academic equity standard that would provide opportunities to compensate for educational deficiencies or substandard education. Students from poor families and racial/ethnic minorities in the United States are more likely to attend schools that make it difficult to realize the goal of preparing for college, which means in the real marketplace of education, the financial access standard is not met. Historically, compensatory education programs intended to remedy educational inequalities before college, and remedial programs provided additional means to adjust during college (Mirón and St. John, 2003). However, these mechanisms have come under attack in recent decades (Wong, 2003), along with need-based grant aid.

If the ideal academic access standard were met and/or if there were education support that equalized academic opportunity, the second principle of justice could be balanced with a fair and just approach to financial aid, regardless of the direct costs of attending. In other words, if financial support from the government were a means tested and adequate, there would be equal access for students who prepare across income and ethnic groups. It is conceivable that both grants and loans can be used to provide financial access to students who meet the academic access standard set by colleges and universities. However, since there has been a shift in federal policy from an emphasis on grants for low-income students to loans for all students, it is important to use the financial access standard as a basis for assessing the fairness of this shift.

The just saving principle is less often used in efforts to evaluate the effects of public finance policy. However, in this global finance period there has been a loud and sustained call for lower taxes. While a progressive position might argue that the public should pay to adjust inequality regardless of the costs, consideration of the rights of taxpayers suggests a third tenet of justice: if the costs of two options differ and the effects are the same with respect to the basic right (in this case academic access) and the equal right (in this case financial access), there is reason to consider just saving as being related to taxpayer savings as well as to basic and equal rights.

If the quality of education and both standards of access are maintained in two scenarios and one of these has lower costs than the other, it seems reasonable to assume that the lower-cost approach is more efficient, that it can be delivered at a lower cost to taxpayers. However, if one form of finance reduces either academic access, as measured by the opportunity for prepared students to attend, or by financial access, as measured by equal access, then it might be considered to have a false efficiency (St. John, 1994). Thus, in combination with the other two principles, the just saving principle gives us a third principle to consider with respect to financial access: cross-generational support is justified as a basic liberty, as are funds for equal opportunity in access within generations.

1.3 Indicators of justice

Using this framework, St. John (2003) has employed three indicators for a balanced examination of the efficacy of public finance policy:

- College participation rates for high school graduates of college age—whether students who meet minimum qualifications for college actually enroll—is used as an indicator of the basic right, or the extent of academic access.
- Equality or inequality in participation rates across income groups and/or race/ethnic groups in the same cohort is used as an indicator of the equal right, the extent of financial access for low-income prepared students.
- The taxpayers' costs for higher education as an indicator related to the just saving and difference principles to determine whether there is injustice in the system of public finance.

The reason for using the three indicators is that they provide a means of balancing the interests of conservative voters who value lower taxes with the interests of diverse groups who are less likely to benefit from education if it is not adequately funded. Inclusion of taxpayer costs as an indicator permits the open discussion of the interests of diverse groups without necessarily pitting one set of interests against another. For example, using this indicator permits consideration of whether one approach to public finance might reduce inequalities at lower cost to taxpayers than an alternative strategy, an approach consonant logically with the rationales that have been used in conservative public finance arguments.

In the US system of higher education, it is appropriate to consider the role of both state and federal finance. However, given the constraints on the length of this chapter, the federal financial aid system is our primary focus. Differences in financial and academic access created by state education finance policies are also considered.

2. THE EFFECTS OF POLICY AND ACCESS

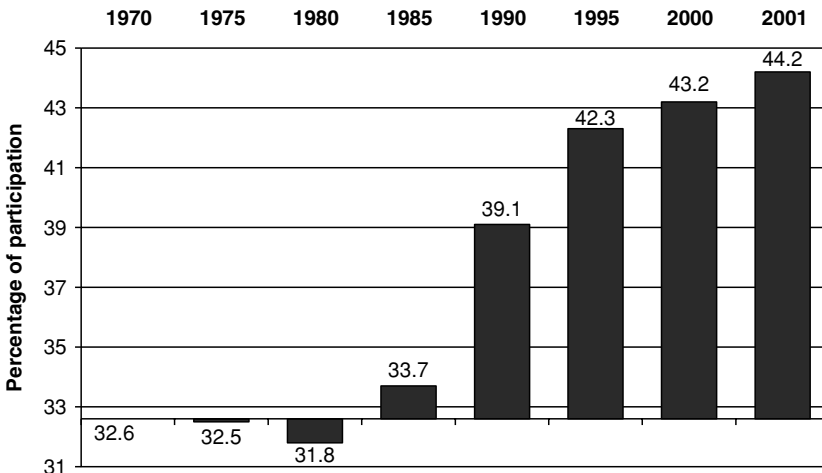
This assessment of the impact of federal policy first uses the three indicators to examine national trends in the United States. This analysis updates analyses presented in *Refinancing the College Dream* (St. John, 2003) and a comprehensive review of research on the effects of student aid in the country (St. John, 2003). After these trend analyses, we consider two possible explanations for the trends observed: the influence of changes in public finance policies and the influence of changes in education policies.

2.1 Indicators of justice

First, when we examine trends in participation rates for students who graduated from high school (Figure 20-1), it is apparent that the role of enrollment in college remained relatively flat in the 1970s, a period of substantial expansion in the number of students enrolled in higher education. Yet the participation rate increased dramatically after 1980. The percentage of college-age high school graduates who were enrolled in college was substantially higher in the 1980s than in the 1970s and still higher in the 1990s. Thus, academic access expanded.

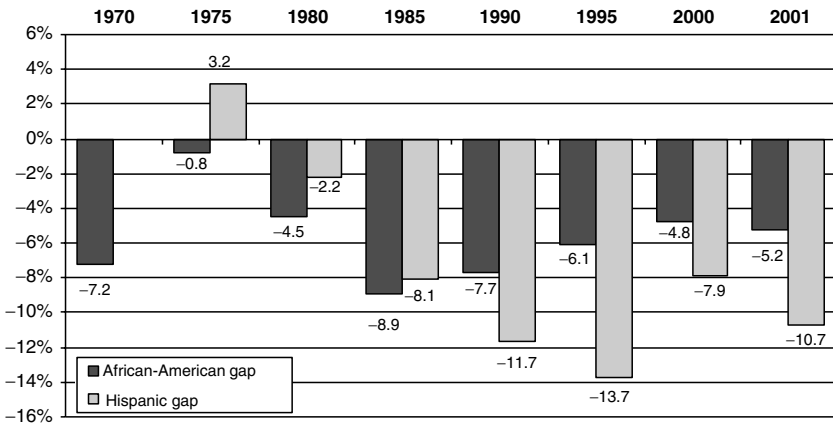
To interpret this pattern, however, we need to consider whether college participation expanded because high school graduates were better prepared or for other reasons. The baby boom generation was forcing rapid expansion of US colleges in the 1960s and 1970s, but the size of the college-age cohorts dropped after 1980 (NCES, 2000). Thus, the other question that must be considered is whether the education reforms of the 1980s and the 1990s—the so-called “excellence” movement—actually improved preparation or whether colleges lowered their admission standards as a means of maintaining enrollment.

Second, when we examine whether there was equal opportunity, a different picture emerges. In the mid-1970s, Whites and minorities who had graduated from high school attended college at nearly the same rate (Figure 20-2). In the United States, race/ethnic groups are frequently used as indicators of



Source: NCES Digest (2002), Table 186.

Figure 20-1. Trends in participation rate of traditional college-age high school graduates by year—1970–2001.



Source: Adapted from St. John (2003); 2000 and 2001 data from NCES Digest (2002), Table 187.

Figure 20-2. Difference gaps in the college enrollment rates of Hispanic and African-American 18- to 24-year old high school graduates compared to White.

financial justice because there is better data on race/ethnicity than on income. And there are very great income disparities across race/ethnic groups: average incomes for African-Americans and Hispanics are much lower than for Whites and Asians. Both Whites and Asians have great economic diversity. Recent immigrants from Southeast Asia face difficulties of assimilation and discrimination; rural Americans, both White and African-American, have higher poverty rates than urban Americans. Comparisons between income groups reveal a similar pattern (Ellwood and Kane, 2000; ACSFA, 2002) to those indicated in Figure 20-2. However, there is no consistent data available on income groups, largely as a consequence of survey methods (i.e., questions about income categories) and inflation, so more consistent data is available on race/ethnicity.

During the enrollment growth of the 1970s, relatively equal access was maintained, but the United States failed to meet this equity standard in the 1980s and 1990s. There were differences in the gap for Hispanics as compared to African-Americans. Hispanics, the group with lower levels of parents' education and higher levels of new immigrants, had a larger gap in enrollment rates compared to Whites. African-Americans had a more substantial ethos of uplift and greater differentiation of parents' education and income than Hispanics (Allen-Haynes et al., 2003; St. John et al., in press). Even differences in the sizes of the gaps in enrollment for prepared Hispanics and African-Americans as compared to Whites is related to differences in income and family education, providing further support for the notion that changes in public finance could be a cause for the disparities.

These analyses consider participation by high school graduates. Students who graduate from high school meet a minimum standard of

access for at least 2-year colleges. Yet it is difficult to argue that changes in schools could have caused one group to prepare better than another, but this remains a possibility. So there was reason to examine the evidence. Studies of changes in federal policies in both Title I (Wong, 2003) and special education (Manset-Williamson and Washburn, 2002) reveal that these policy changes have not improved the achievement gap. Instead of making refinements in programs that improve opportunities for low-income or educationally at-risk children, these programs have been modified to promote the new market agenda. For example, Title I has provided money to schools to try out comprehensive reforms, many offered through private corporations.

Third, there were substantial changes in taxpayer costs of higher education during this period. Figure 20-3 combines total dollars from need-based grants and from other specially directed aid, such as veterans' benefits, with an estimate of subsidy costs for federal loans (using US\$50 per dollar of subsidized loan, consistent with McPherson and Schapiro, 1997). Not all federal loans have a subsidy; loans that were not subsidized, including loans to parents, were not included in this estimate. Using these metrics to estimate taxpayer costs per student, we estimate a substantial pattern of decline in federal costs per full-time equivalent (FTE) student after 1975 (St. John, 2003). Decline in federal educational benefits for veterans helps to explain the drop in costs in the late 1970s.

Elimination of Social Security Survivors' Education Benefits, reductions in Pell and other need-based grants, and increased use of loans instead of grants explains the decline in taxpayer costs per student after 1980. In the late 1990s there was a slight rise in educational cost per student, which is attributable to an even more substantial expansion of loans and modest increased investment in Pell grants.

When trend comparisons are made using the three indicators, it is evident that overall access expanded after 1980 in spite of the shift to a high-loan policy for federal aid to students. Taxpayer costs per student also

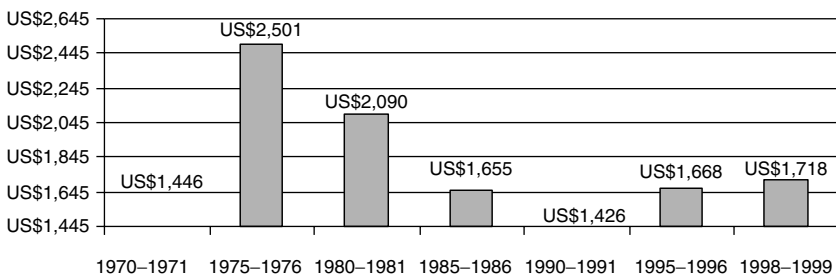


Figure 20-3. Federal tax dollars per FTE expended for Federal Student Financial Aid 1970-1998.

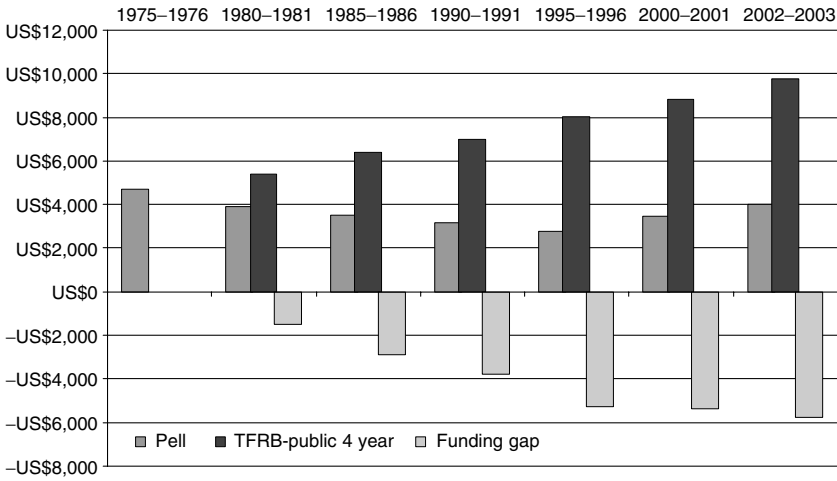
declined after 1980. However, the decline in costs also parallels the increased inequalities across race/ethnic and income groups (St. John, 2003). While it cost less for the federal government to subsidize college access after the high-loan policy was adopted, greater inequalities followed. Given the relative economic success of the high-loan policy, it would not make sense to move backwards towards an earlier period when there were several different large-scale grant programs through Social Security, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and so forth. Rather, it is appropriate to consider how policy changes linked up with changes in indicators, so that a balanced response can be envisioned, an approach that retains effective features of current policy.

2.2 The impact of public policy

If our goal is to gain an understanding of the effects of policies in education and public finance, it is important to consider how both sets of policies have influenced the three trends. The fact that the shift to reliance on loans had lower costs is self-evident. If we had actual costs of loans, the estimated taxpayer costs would be much lower than presented in Figure 20-3, given the decline in interest rates and default rates. (As the percentage of loans going to middle- and upper-income students increased, there was a corresponding decline in default because graduates and dropouts were better able to repay loans if they were from middle- or high-income families (Flint, 1997).) In addition to considering trends in costs, it is important to explore the reasons for the disparity in opportunity that emerged after 1980. In addition, it is important to consider how state school reforms have influenced graduation rates. The issues of financial access and academic access are examined further below, considering further evidence from national studies.

2.2.1 The impact of reductions in federal need-based grants on financial access

The reduction in federal need-based grants after 1980 corresponded with increases in tuition charges for public colleges and universities. Figure 20-4 illustrates trends in the cost of attending public 4-year colleges as compared to the maximum Pell grant awards. Tuition charges increased after 1980 in public colleges largely as a consequence of the decline in the percentage of educational costs subsidized by direct state appropriations (St. John, 2003). Thus, not only was the post-1980 period one of growth in loans, but also a time of growing college costs. For students from the lowest-income families, students eligible for the maximum Pell grant, the costs remaining after the



Source: TFRB: tuition, fees, room, and board from college board trends in student Aid 2003: Pell data from NCES Digest of statistics 1989 and 2003.

Figure 20-4. Financial trends: the growing gap between the declining federal Pell grants and rising university attendance costs.

maximum award grew substantially. In the early 2000s, the costs remaining after federal grants are nearly US\$8,000, about one-third of the income for a family making only US\$25,000. This amount is substantially higher than the loan limits for federally subsidized programs. In states without substantial need-based grant programs, there is a serious financial access problem.

The gap between the Pell maximum and college costs grew after the 1980s, a parallel to the increased gap in enrollment for low-income and minority students. In addition, a substantial body of research on college students enrolled during this period indicates that student need-based grant aid had a substantial influence on enrollment opportunities for low-income students (Heller, 1997; St. John, 2003). Therefore, there is good reason to conclude that the decline in grants was a cause of the growing gap in educational opportunity after 1980.

A recent study of the impact of state grant programs provides further insights into the direct and indirect effects of financial policies (St. John et al., 2004b). The study used time-series analyses to examine the impact of tuition charges, state funding for merit grants, and state funding for need-based grants on high school graduation rates (using financial amounts 2 years before graduation) and college enrollment rates for high school graduates (using financial amounts the fall after graduation). Fixed effects regressions were used for five time periods (1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000) in each of the 50 states (St. John et al., 2004b). These analyses provide insight into the direct and indirect effects of the finance policies that were in place during this period.

First, the analyses revealed that the new financial strategies had indirect effects on enrollment through preparation (as measured by high school graduation rates). The amount of tuition charged by public higher education institutions in a state during the sophomore year (10th grade) of high school was negatively associated with high school graduation rates 2 years later, indicating that the shift in public finance discouraged academic preparation. This represents an indirect and unintended effect of public finance policies. When students did not think they could afford to enroll in college, they apparently were less likely to graduate. In addition, the amount of state funding for merit grants 2 years before graduation was negatively associated with high school graduation rates (St. John, 2004).

It was necessary to consider the indirect effects of student grants (analyses of graduation rates) because of rationalizations used for merit programs in the United States. Arguments about academic preparation were used to promote these programs (Bishop, 1992). Usually these programs set a merit threshold for eligibility for a state grant, typically grade point average (GPA) and test scores (Heller, 2004b). Therefore it is reasonable that such programs could induce dropout, discouraging some students with C-plus or B-minus averages, students who would have qualified for college admission but not merit grants, from completing high school. Thus, there is substantial evidence that state finance policies had a negative effect on preparation for college.

Second, these findings also revealed a direct positive association between funding for state grants and college enrollment rates in the states (St. John, 2003). Funding for need-based grants had a more substantial effect on enrollment rates than did funding for merit grants, but both forms of state grants were positively associated with college enrollment rates. In combination with the trend analysis above, these findings further substantiate that the reduction in federal grants led to increased inequality after 1980, especially in states with inadequate state need-based grant programs.

The fact that student financial aid programs—both non-need (or merit-based) and need-based—would influence enrollment rates is not a surprise. However, the fact that both tuition charges and merit aid would discourage high school completion merits elaboration. State grants are now necessary to ensure financial access for low-income students. Only a few states ensure equal access through need-based grants. However, a growing number of states also attempt to encourage students to prepare better by providing merit grants. One commonly stated rationale for these programs is to improve preparation. However, the research evidence indicates that these programs have an effect opposite of that intended. For low-income students in the 10th grade of high school in one of these merit states, the opportunities for college access are limited if they have better than average grades (say a C+ average) in preparatory courses. These students apparently look at tuition charges and the prospect of getting a grant and decided they

would be better off getting a job or joining the military. The military has better education benefits (student grants for service) than are available in most states. So there is a clear incentive for low-income, middle-ability students to seek alternatives other than high school completion if they want a decent income or want to go to college eventually.

Most high school students who receive B averages in preparatory courses are likely to go on to college if they have the money. Merit grants go to students with a B average (or who meet the various merit criteria) whether or not they have financial need. So some of the merit grants go to children who could afford to go anyway and some of these grants go to children who could not have afforded college without the grant aid. No doubt there is sound reason for these programs to influence enrollment. However, they have less substantial influence on enrollment rates than need-based grants.

So there is a general pattern of inequality in educational access in the United States due to the low level of federal grants. In addition, the large variability in state grant programs means that there is also inequality for low-income students across states. In some states, low-income students who qualify for admission to college can afford to go (i.e., in states with substantial need-based programs). In other states, low-income students who meet the academic qualification through their high school achievement can compete for merit grants. And in many states, low-income students lack financial access whether or not they have high achievement in high school. Thus, the financial policies of the federal government and the financial aid policies of most states preclude equal opportunity along the dimension of financial access.

2.2.2 The impact of school reform on academic access

A second set of questions about access relates to the influence of state education policies on preparation (e.g., high school graduation rates) and college enrollment rates. The counterargument to research findings on the impact of grants that conservatives use is that school improvement can have a more substantial influence than grants on college enrollment (e.g., Finn, 2001). If we are to hold a neutral position in analyzing the claims of both rationales for access, we need to consider evidence related to the counterarguments (e.g., the academic rationale).

The initial analyses using the justice-centered framework (St. John, 2003) examine evidence from research on the effects of school reforms across decades, taking into account the lag time between K-12 interventions and high school graduation. There was improvement in high school graduation rates in the 1960s and 1970s, indicating that equity-based reform—desegregation after 1954 and education reforms in the 1950s (science and

math education) and 1960s (compensatory education for low-income students)—may have had an influence on improving preparation. However, high school graduation rates have remained flat or have declined since the mid-1980s, raising questions about the impact of the excellence reforms of the current period. Yet there was a substantial increase in college enrollment rates after 1980 (see Figure 20-1), raising the possibility that the standards-driven reforms of the past few decades improved the college qualifications of students who graduated, or creating an alternative to the hypothesis that colleges simply dipped further down in the pool of high school graduates to fill their enrollment quotas.

To test these ideas further, time-series analyses were used to examine the influence of education reforms (i.e., math standards, math graduation requirements, exit exams, and so forth) on average SAT scores in states, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates (St. John et al., 2004c). This study used fixed effects regressions for the 1990s: all years for SAT scores and graduation and even years for college enrollment rates (available only even years). In the United States the major college admissions tests—the SAT and the ACT—are administered by nonprofit organizations. (The analyses found that inclusion of ACT tests had virtually identical effects to those noted.) These analyses revealed:

- Some of the education reforms, including the implementation of math standards and requiring more math courses for graduation, were positively associated with SAT scores.
- Many of these same reforms were negatively associated with high school graduation rates. However, high school exit exams and school funding were both positively associated with graduation rates when both were in the models. (In the analyses of state public finance strategies (St. John et al., 2004c), state funding had not been significantly associated with graduation rates. Therefore, there is a confounding relationship between funding and exit exams that merits further examination.)
- The education reforms were not significantly related to college enrollment rates for high school graduates.

In combination, these findings provide further evidence related to the role of education policies in promoting preparation for college. Standards-driven education reforms had an indirect effect on preparation and financial access through improvement of SAT scores. However, these reforms were negatively associated with graduation rates and were ineffectual with respect to college enrollment. Thus, the academic reform rationale has mixed support. More important, this evidence does not support the proposition that school reforms were a cause for the growth in the college enrollment rate after 1980. The alternative hypothesis—that the decline in the size of the college-age cohort and in the admissions standards of colleges

and universities explains the increased enrollment rates after 1980—provides a more plausible explanation.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE ACCESS CHALLENGE

Education reform in the United States is in the midst of yet another quandary. After nearly three decades of expanded college access after the Supreme Court's 1954 decision on *Brown v. Board of Education* (US Supreme Court, 1954), the US Department of Education pressed the alarm button with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This report argued that many students were still dropping out and that many students were graduating from high school underprepared. Since that time there has been a plethora of standards-driven reforms in K-12 education and a major decline in state and federal support for higher education. The education reforms were driven by arguments about excellence and accountability, and the changes in public financing of higher education were driven by the privatization rationale.

First, it is evident that there has been an increase in college enrollment rates for high school graduates since 1980. Reviews of trends and research on the effects of school reforms have revealed that standards-driven reforms—like implementation of math standards and more math requirements for graduation from high school—were associated with improved test scores but were negatively related to high school graduation rates and were not significantly linked to college enrollment rates (St. John et al., 2004c). Consequently, there is little evidence to support claims that these reforms had any effect on the observed increase in college enrollment rates. Rather, it appears that the alternative explanation holds up better: Colleges decreased admissions standards to fill their enrollment quotas, resulting in higher participation rates in a period of decline in the size of high school cohorts.

Second, the move to privatize public higher education had a negative effect on college preparation, at least as measured by high school graduation rates. Both the increase in tuition and in funding for state merit grants were associated with lower state high school graduation rates during the 1990s (St. John et al., 2004b). The incremental erosion of high school graduation rates observed in the 1980s and 1990s (St. John, 2003) was apparently related to both the standards-driven reforms and the changes in public finance.

Third, the privatization approach to public finance enabled states and the federal government to realize some tax savings while increasing enrollment. This consequence of privatization should not be overlooked. As long

as equal access to quality education opportunities can be maintained, reductions in costs could be beneficial to society as a whole and to the conceptions of justice that are widely held by voters. It is evident from this review and analysis that the erosion is attributable to the decline in the purchasing power of need-based grants (and the inadequate funding of both federal and state need-based grants) rather than to loans per se. This distinction is important: loans for the middle class are a lower cost way of financing college access than are subsidies to colleges. However, it is crucial that there be sufficient need-based grant aid (or forgivable loans) for the low-income students who now must borrow or work excessively in the high-tuition, high-loan environment of public finance for education.

Fourth, the increased inequality in educational opportunity after 1980 was directly attributable to the decline in need-based grants. Not only did the increased gap in enrollment rates correspond with the decline in the purchasing power of federal grants, but there is a substantial and growing body of evidence that grant aid has a large direct effect on college enrollment and persistence by low-income students (Heller, 1997, 2002, 2004a,b; St. John, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2004; St. John et al., 2004c). Further, there is evidence that providing an early guarantee of aid can substantially improve preparation and college enrollment, including enrollment in 4-year colleges (St. John et al., 2002; St. John and Hu, 2004).

Stepping back from these analyses, it is evident that balance is needed in policy research on the effects of public policy on educational opportunity. The justice-centered framework (St. John, 2004) provided a basis for assessing the impact of educational strategies related to accountability and privatization. The results were mixed. The analyses illustrate the false nature of the efficiencies of privatization, the decline in equal opportunity to attend college, as well as how these unintended outcomes can be mitigated. By integrating more emphasis on need-based grants and guarantees of adequate support for low-income students into the high-tuition, high-loan strategy of public finance, it is possible to correct the major problems that resulted from this new scheme of quasi-public financing of higher education. However, the accountability movement in the United States gets even more mixed reviews with respect to the impact it has had on high school graduation and college enrollment. It is time to consider making major adjustments to the dominant school reform strategies as well, an issue that merits further investigation.

Perhaps more important still, the analyses of the impact of student financial aid and state education policies contradicted the direction of education policy in the country. There is a clear pattern of bias and statistical errors in federal reports that have argued that academic preparation is the primary issue in access (Becker, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2004; Heller, 2004a; Lee, 2004). Further, research that examines the impact of the policies these

erroneous reports promote illustrates that the policies have the opposite of their purportedly intended effects. There are serious issues in equal opportunity that have been disguised and overlooked by the new language of reform.

The new market strategies can be crafted to work in ways that promote equal opportunity. The new loan scheme in Australia, for example, is a model that seems to have potential (Lleras, 2004). However, a balanced and consistent set of criteria are needed to judge effects. In this chapter we have used a few such criteria. Financial inequalities and racial inequalities are closely linked in the United States. Here we used race classifications because this data is more accessible. However, we also discussed several analyses that illustrate the underlying access problem related to finances; many qualified students are being left behind for the wrong reasons. As the United States and other nations adjust to the new market strategies, it is crucial that access and equal opportunity be included among the criteria used to judge the success of these reforms.

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PART IV

ILLUSTRATIVE AND SPECIAL CASES

Chapter 21

FROM EXCLUSION TO PARTICIPATION IN ENGLISH HIGHER EDUCATION

John Storan

1. INTRODUCTION

There has always been diversity within the higher education sector in England, with different views on the role of universities and colleges. Many of the challenges to the socially exclusive history of higher education there, including the development of access arrangements and the strategies and measures designed to both widen and increase participation, have tended to be confined only to a few universities. In other words, the move from a low-participation, socially exclusive university sector in England has been largely taken forward by a relatively small part of the sector. The negative consequences educationally, socially, and economically of this trend's continuing have led to the need for the development of a new policy approach.

In this chapter, I shall therefore discuss how the position is beginning to change through moves to more holistic planning and the establishment of a strategic approach to widening participation by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The sector is at a stage of transition in this process, and the chapter examines that approach and seeks to assess the response from higher education institutions (HEIs).

The majority of HEFCE funding is for teaching and research, and for many years HEIs have been free to utilize this funding as they wish, while the HEFCE has gently steered the sector in response to the government's agenda. The previous Secretary of State for Education radically changed that approach through the provision of more detailed guidance to the HEFCE in order to influence the sector. A constant emphasis within this guidance has been the highlighting of the government's commitment to widening participation. The HEFCE has responded to this policy initiative by establishing a progressive planning approach and a framework within which to work.

It is important, of course, to understand something of the sector that the HEFCE has tried to influence. There has been an increase in students in

higher education from 200,000 in 1963 to 1.8 million in 1998, an increase in the number of universities, and a greater balance in the proportion of women students—indeed, women now outnumber men in all forms of higher education. Some of the reasons for the gender shift have been changing attitudes, expansion, and the redesignation of courses that traditionally recruit large numbers of women in higher education, such as nursing and physiotherapy. The number of part-time students has increased dramatically and the provisions of alternative access routes for adults have become commonplace.

Similarly, the representation of minority ethnic groups has increased to about 13% as compared to 6% of the population; likewise, initiatives designed to enhance support for the disabled have led to increased representation. The real picture is not that rosy though, since the statistics cover a number of significant imbalances within each category. However, the major gap in seeking a more inclusive higher education is in the filling of places by what is known as low socioeconomic groups. The representation of the poorest in society within higher education, at about 25%, has hardly changed since 1963, which lends support to the criticism from some quarters that universities are essentially the playgrounds of the privileged and bastions of the elite.

The challenge, therefore, has been to seek change that encourages and enables young people from low socioeconomic groups to enter and to succeed within higher education, at a time when the student financial support model is undergoing a complete transformation and is less generous than previous arrangements, with support now channeled through a loan system. Often the groups targeted are those most culturally alien to the concept of taking on debt as a means of benefiting themselves, especially when the actual benefit is not immediately clear. Similarly, many young people in these groups will be going to schools that have some of the lowest attainment rates in the country, whereas the higher education curriculum is designed to receive those coming from the most elite school curriculum with high levels of attainment. This mismatch has yet to lead to wholesale curriculum reform within higher education, but instead has led to an approach more akin to a deficit model that argues that it is difficult to widen participation since the students' standards are not high enough or that these groups do not apply to enter. This latter point focuses on the participation levels at the age of 16 and overlooks the lack of a culture through which the community engages with higher education.

The government's drive towards an inclusive society is explained through a simple human capital approach, which assumes that people will realize it is in their best interest to upgrade their skills and to make themselves more economically efficient for the good of the economy. This approach provides no real basis for understanding the major shifts that have

to take place in many communities for them simply to understand higher education, to say nothing of their participating in it.

2. THE HEFCE APPROACH, 1998–2000

To help to change this basis, the HEFCE has sought to encourage HEIs through a mixture of funding modes, to engage with some of these challenges, and to change institutional behavior.

The HEFCE has introduced a number of measures to seek to widen participation in higher education. In determining these measures, the council worked from a set of principles, which were spelled out in *Circular 99/33* (HEFCE, 1999) as

- access to achievement,
- increased collaboration,
- recognizing diversity, and
- targeting certain groups.

There has been general support across the sector for these principles, particularly for funding to be primarily allocated through the general teaching formula approach with some separate initiative money. The council's objectives were to

- reward proven success,
- recognize additional costs,
- increase representation of particular disadvantaged groups,
- build partnerships,
- promote and disseminate good practice,
- support activity designed to retain students, and
- encourage collaboration.

The implementation of these objectives can be divided into a number of actions, including institutional planning and review, general teaching funding, regional focus, specialist funding, and disability funding.

2.1 Institutional planning and review

This process was introduced in 1999 at the request for Initial Strategic Statements on widening participation from HEIs, where they were asked to identify relevant strategies and targets. Actions were then measured and evaluated through the Annual Operating Statement, produced in July each year. This approach crucially enables HEIs to identify their role in widening participation, thus reflecting the diversity of the sector and moving away from imposing a strict definition that may not be generally accepted or is overly broad and has no real value. At the same time, monitoring through the annual operating statement was designed to strengthen the link

between developments in widening participation and institutional strategic planning. There is a continuing debate, however, about the effectiveness of the annual operating statement as a means of monitoring an institution's yearly progress towards set targets for widening participation.

2.2 General teaching funding

This funding, known as premium funding, is a per capita supplement to the teaching fund for students from the underrepresented groups, which are likely to generate additional costs for HEIs. The students identified are matured, part-time, young people from targeted postcode areas and disabled students.

Another category of funding within the teaching allocation is that for Additional Student Number (ASN) Funding. Each year in the autumn the council asks the HEIs and further education colleges (FECs) if they wish to bid for additional student numbers. Many of these will be used for widening participation. Typically, these will be aimed at "sub-degree" or part-time courses for particular groups. In 2000–2001, 87% of the allocations were for bids that addressed one or more of the widening access priorities, and 52% of these went to institutions that had demonstrated high quality higher education provision.

2.3 Regional focus

The regional focus concentrates on the funding of projects in a geographical area, which is overseen by the National Advisory Panel and locally by the Regional Advisory Networks. Projects apply for funding according to determined national criteria and agreed regional priorities. The funding is for 3-year projects, with some additional projects of more limited timescale are funded jointly with the HEFCE and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

2.4 Specialist funding

This funding is for particular initiatives, some of which are only available to certain HEIs. The specialist funding is often time-limited. The initiatives include Education Action Zone (EAZ), Support, and Higher Education Summer Schools (HESS). These were originally called Millennium Summer Schools and are funded by the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE) through the HEFCE. They were announced in November 1999 with a select number of HEIs invited to participate. They are aimed at 16–17-year-olds defined as "gifted and talented" in inner city schools. The criteria:

- are aged 16–17,
- have high potential,
- are from disadvantaged backgrounds where entry to higher education is not the norm,
- have not already selected universities, and
- are based in areas that fall into Excellence in Cities.

A total of £4 million was allocated, and the HEIs involved are located within targeted inner city areas and those with high entry requirements.

2.5 Disability funding

This is supported through a mixture of premium funding and project initiatives. The council wished to see all HEIs develop high quality provision for students with disabilities, and it invited bids for a three-year special funding program. The program has three strands: first, to improve provision in HEIs that currently have little provision for, or experience in, supporting students with disabilities; second, to promote and transfer expertise and good practice; and third, to encourage collaboration between institutions to make effective use of existing resources and available funds.

3. IMPACT OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

The development of a strategic approach to widening participation to higher education represents a rather different way of challenging exclusion and promoting participation. The immediate national policy drivers for this approach are to be found principally in the recommendations of the Dearing Committee (1997):

We recommend to the government and the funding bodies that when allocating funds for the expansion of higher education, they give priority to those institutions which can demonstrate a commitment to Widening Participation, and have in place a participation strategy, a mechanism for monitoring progress and a provision for review by the governing body of achievement.

The role adopted and the measures that have been introduced by the HEFCE to promote a strategic approach across the higher education sector as a whole are therefore largely a response to the Dearing Committee's position. The government's own response to this recommendation highlights the importance of targeting funding to universities who have a commitment to widening participation and plans to improve access. The contribution that joint capacity-building projects between further and HEIs might make in addressing low expectations and

achievement so as to promote progression to higher education was also seen as an important area for funding support (DFEE, 1998). The consultation conducted by the HEFCE (1998), which invited HEIs' comments on the development of strategies for widening participation, indicated widespread support for a link between further and HEI—which represents a major difference from previous funding policy concerned with access and underrepresentation. Formula funding would be strategically targeted at HEIs that demonstrate that they were widening participation. HEIs were asked to submit their initial strategic statements in October 1999 (HEFCE, 1999). The request for statements included generic guidance to institutions on what might be covered in their strategies. Although asked to follow the guidance indicators in developing their initial statements, the HEFCE recognized that there should be no prescription of models and that diversity was to be supported and, by implication, encouraged. It can be argued that the tension between diversity and generic guidance has thus far been a significant feature of the policy development of strategies for widening participation. To explore this issue in greater depth and to examine how HEIs have responded to the policy developments introduced by the HEFCE, an analysis was undertaken. It evaluated both the effectiveness of the generic guidance provided to HEIs in *Circular 99/33* (HEFCE, 1999) and assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies.

Following the submission of strategies in October 1999, they were placed into one of the nine HEFCE regions together with the two northern Ireland HEI strategies. For the purposes of the analysis, each strategy was looked at as part of a regional cluster. At the time of the original analysis, 120 initial statements had been received. Each statement was analyzed with a view to the extent to which it included or covered the 12 generic guidance areas (see Table 21-1) provided in the HEFCE *Circular 99/33*. It should be noted

Table 21-1. Generic guidance areas.

A	Aims and objectives
A	Mechanisms for achieving aims and objectives
B	Links between objectives and corporate/financial/other plans
C	Profile of student population, present/potential
C	Use of performance indicators
D	Identification of underrepresented groups
D	Targets for underrepresented groups
E	Summary of approaches for improving retention for nontraditional students
E	Targets for student retention for nontraditional students
F	Systems for monitoring progress—quantifiable or other
G	Key partners in widening participation strategy implementation
G	Key collaborative relationships in widening participation strategy implementation

that there was no compulsion for HEIs to comply with the guidance areas; however, what feedback there has been on this suggests that most welcomed the guidance provided, even if they did not follow it in its entirety.

A numerical value was assigned to the strength of coverage given to the 12 generic guidance areas in each statement (Table 21-2).

Statements received a numerical value for each key section, as well as an aggregate rating for the overall statement. Although it was suggested that statements should not exceed five pages, there was considerable variation in length. Some were a great deal shorter than the maximum suggested length, while others greatly exceeded this and included appendices. Once all the statements had been analyzed, it became possible to identify some of the initial trends and issues emerging. It also enabled a greater understanding of some of the areas of strategic planning for widening participation where HEIs need further support. The strongest areas of coverage are given in Table 21-3.

3.1 Aims and objectives

A significant percentage of HEIs provided clear aims and objectives for work towards widening participation. In a number of cases these were directly linked to institutional mission statements and therefore suggest a preexisting commitment to widening participation. Statements commonly referred to three factors as important dimensions of their aims and objectives: stimulating demand, developing an inclusive learning environment, and establishing/maintaining an institutional ethos of diversity and inclusion.

3.2 Student profile

The second area that statements covered either well or very well related to the profile of their student population, present or potential. Data sources repeatedly referred to in statements were: Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS), HEFCE, Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Characteristics of existing or future student populations that were commonly mentioned included: ethnicity, age, gender, entry qualifications, and retention rates. It is interesting to note that very few statements made direct reference to social class as a factor.

Table 21-2. Strength of coverage of each area scale for assessment.

0	Not covered
1	Covered
2	Well covered
3	Very well covered

Table 21-3. Strongest area of coverage of the generic guidance.

1	Aims and objectives 46% covered this area well or very well
2	Profile of student population present/potential 45% well or very well
3	Mechanisms for achieving aims and objectives 34% well or very well

3.3 Mechanisms

The third guidance area that rated comparatively strongly was “mechanisms for achieving aims and objectives.” These relate to how and in what ways the aims and objectives established were to be operationalized. Here four factors were strongly identified by HEIs: outreach and partnership activities, curriculum development, recruitment and marketing, and student support and guidance. Some of these factors are predictably associated with widening participation, the reference to curriculum development possibly being the exception.

Turning to the weakest coverage areas, the analysis revealed a consistent pattern of either an absence of coverage or minimal coverage in relation to the guidance areas included in Table 21-4.

3.4 Targets and performance indicators

All three weakest areas of coverage involved either the setting of targets for widening participation or the deployment of performance indicator (PI) information to support the setting of targets. It is difficult to understand fully why coverage is so low in these areas, although some HEIs included comments in their statements to the effect that the data they had at their disposal was sometimes contradictory and/or insufficiently robust enough to be applied. So one possible explanation for weak coverage in this area is a lack of confidence in the existing data. The low level at which targets were set has direct consequences for monitoring the impact of strategies since the monitoring relies on targets provided which are reported through the annual operating statements.

Table 21-4. Weakest areas of coverage.

1	Targets for student retention for nontraditional students 91% low coverage
2	Use of performance indicators 87% low coverage
3	Targets for underrepresented groups 81% low coverage

4. THE HEFCE APPROACH, 2000–2004

This review of the strategies developed by HEIs, coupled with the Secretary of State's announcement to Universities of United Kingdom (UUK) that he wished to focus on social inclusion within the inner city (DFEE, 2000), led to a further development in the approach used by the HEFCE. The intention behind the strategic approach has always been to develop integrated approaches within institutions and to seek change in the participation and success of underrepresented groups. The lack of clarity over target setting in the first round of strategies and the general absence of a holistic approach led the HEFCE to seek revised strategies with more overt targets and stricter accountability. To achieve this, the HEFCE consulted the sector and then introduced new guidance (HEFCE, 2000, 2001) on both the form and the content of the revised strategies for widening participation.

This new request was very different from the 1999 version in form and in what it sought to achieve. Lessons had been learned, and HEIs were asked to approach the outcome in a new way; they were informed of the funding available through the special formula and then asked to develop a strategy for the period 2001–2004, which would have to be approved by the HEFCE before funding would be released. This was the same approach as that used for Learning and Teaching Strategies in 1999–2000, which sought to ensure that the target setting was in place and that the premium funding allocated for the activities for which it was intended. This is now a relatively common approach by the HEFCE, since it seeks to minimize competitive bidding for relatively small sums of money, which enables it to approve the spending and require regular reports on outcomes and progress. The monitoring process is through the Annual Operating Statement, which is produced in July and reports on detailed progress with the institutions corporate plans. The intention being that the strategy for widening participation is seen as part of the everyday business of the HEI rather than as an add-on initiative.

The guidance provided by the HEFCE encouraged HEIs to consider their strategy holistically and not only to take account of the planned changes in participation but also to ensure success of the student group. It also encouraged the use of a student life cycle approach so that HEIs would be able to identify the actions they would take in relation to the student life cycle and invest in raising aspirations, supporting through the entry process, supporting in higher education and helping to move on. The latter two categories require HEIs to reflect on their approaches to student support, learning and teaching, the curriculum, employability strategies, and, most important, staff development. The challenge for HEIs is to develop a detailed action plan and to engage the body of the university with those commitments.

5. THE STUDENT LIFE CYCLE

One way of drawing together the various stages or phases involved in developing an integrated approach to widening participation is to adopt the student life cycle approach. This approach seeks to breakdown activities into stages and allows an institution to demonstrate how it engages at that level or how it plans to do so. This should be possible irrespective of the target group and the level of study. For example, an institution's aspiration-raising approach to adult learners or younger people can be covered effectively within the same area of the strategy. Similarly the stages are appropriate for all modes of study.

5.1 Stages of the life cycle

1. *Aspiration raising*: This is where HEIs work, often in regional partnerships, to raise the aspirations of a variety of groups from adults to school pupils in order to encourage them to participate in higher education. The focus may be on 8-year-olds who visit the HEI just to experience a day in the life of a student, or on 17-year-olds engaging in master classes in order to improve their attainment level. The routes used by the learners are different and the approach used by the HEIs will vary, but there will be some commonality, particularly in terms of data and tracking mechanisms. Clearly institutions can vary the nature of the activity depending on the characteristics of the target group, which may include underrepresented sections of the community. An important element of the aspiration-raising process is to make sure that the potential student begins to gain an understanding of the learning and teaching approaches used within higher education.
2. *Pre-entry phase*: This is the phase in which an HEI targets groups of potential students and seeks to assist them in applying successfully to HEIs. This may be part of a specific compact arrangement with schools or colleges and may involve detailed progression agreements. Again the strategy may differ for the various target groups, but the HEIs should be able to explain the background of the scheme and have a quantitative overview of its impact, as well as staff and student perceptions. A number of the regional projects have this as a strand of activity, and HEIs will have experience to draw upon. In some instances the pre-entry phase will have a barrier-breaking or preparatory session before the learner moves on.
3. *Admission stage*: As the "gatekeeper" to courses, admissions staff have a pivotal role to play in the achievement, or lack thereof, of the strategic aims and objectives of widening participation. Balancing the demand

and supply of different courses with different applicants and ensuring students are appropriately prepared to enter a course of higher education means that admission staffs must be aware of:

- compact schemes,
- access courses (Open College Network [OCN] arrangements),
- assessment of Prior and Experiential Learning,
- target groups, and
- monitoring intakes and reviewing recruitment gaps.

For some students who may have no family background in higher education the very process of admissions may be extremely stressful, and a well-designed admissions process will not only help to reduce stress but also contribute to retention, since the student will be better informed and more aware of the expectations within higher education.

4. *First term/semester*: Rather than refer to induction or arrival or welcome, this stage has been deliberately lengthened to demonstrate that the focus extends across the whole period and is not a question of a quick fix in the first few days. The greater the investment in this period, the less likely a student is to leave, since they will feel more supported. For many students, arriving in higher education can be a lonely and anonymous experience with a strange culture and vocabulary. This is a period of initial support to assist the development of the independent learner and can involve:
 - diagnostic skill exercises,
 - workshop support on either a referred or drop-in basis,
 - learning of higher education skills,
 - establishment of tutor support,
 - peer support groups, and
 - introduction to key assessment issues.
5. *Moving through*: This phase is concerned with supporting the learner after the initial semester, since it is generally believed that once a student has successfully completed the first semester or term, they should have every chance of being successful in their studies. This phase will normally require significantly less attention since the student will feel part of the HEI and its processes. There are strategies that HEIs can adapt, including the provision of guidance about options and the consequence of choice, as well as reviewing the appropriateness of teaching and learning styles.
6. *Employment*: This phase focuses on the preparation for employment or further study after the current course. Issues an HEI might address are the involvement of key skills within the curriculum, the impact of work experience and placement, and the strategies used to support the students as they make the transition to the modern working environment with its challenges, constraints, and opportunities.

In developing the strategies, HEIs will be expected to focus on their evidence base and how specific targets will be set and progress will be monitored.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to examine and explore the changing landscape of university education in England against the background of a changing government and funding policy concerned to both widen and increase participation. I have described a number of the measures that have been developed by universities during this period along with the mixture of funding streams that have been instigated by the funding council to take forward the government's concern to extend higher education participation to underrepresented groups. By considering some of the detail of these policy shifts, it is hoped that the more implicit argument about the organizational and structural changes needed to support high participation and socially diverse higher education population has also come through. The student life cycle model can be understood in one sense as a developmental aid to assist universities to identify areas they might need to target in order to achieve the strategic aims and activities that have been set for widening participation. The changes involved for universities are both wide-ranging and profound, and this is especially the case for those universities that are further back in this process of change than others. While it is too early to be clear about the effect this approach is having sector-wide, it is nevertheless difficult to envisage a return to an elite, socially exclusive higher education system that so successfully restricted the opportunity to go on to higher education to only some parts of the society.

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AFRICAN SCHOOL CURRICULUM AS A FRONT ON WHICH TO WIDEN ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Pai Obanya

1. INTRODUCTION

In Africa the debates over access to education do not center on what metaphors to use in describing it. Africans are less concerned about whether the talk should be of “deepening” or “extending” or “opening” or “closing” access than about the more dogged issue of the “responsiveness” of the educational system to the current challenges. Indeed, there is much more interest in pursuing the question of how the curriculum could be more rapidly revamped to deal with contemporary world concerns in African contexts such that its peoples can be effectively and efficiently empowered. For their empowerment for and incorporation in the learning systems should help them, sooner rather than later, to bridge the class and race divide, as well as the wide digital divide between the North and the South, to access the numerous untapped community and cultural institutions of learning, and to create progressive and dynamic learning societies; for how could Africans pursue the cosmetic issues of what metaphors to use when there is hardly any access to anything on a par with what one could find in the North? It is clear that one thing we can and must do is to apply our curricular development and/or reforms to the general issue of widening access to education for people who really want to be the subjects, and not objects, of the global race for efficient and effective competitiveness. Our major concern in this chapter therefore lies with how African school curriculum should be responding to contemporary world concerns. Basically, the discussion in what follows here has been inspired by the realization that

- curriculum is more of a process than a product;
- curriculum development is a cyclical-linear, and dynamic, activity; and
- the most influential determinant of curriculum events is societal dynamics.

The most remarkable characteristic of the social dynamics of today's world is what has become widely known as "the acceleration of history." This is evident in the fast and unpredictable changes taking place on the world scene.

This chapter will accordingly

- examine the dynamics of the acceleration of history we are all witnessing;
- highlight the impact on and the implications of the acceleration of history for education, as well as for curriculum; and
- suggest ways in which Africa can avoid relapsing into educational and curricular marginalization by adapting its curriculum reform efforts to the dynamics of a world characterized by the acceleration of history.

2. THE ACCELERATION OF HISTORY

While it may not be easy to give a precise definition of the term "acceleration of history," we can draw attention to its central characteristics in light of events and social phenomena that have characterized the world of the early twenty-first century.

Perhaps the phenomenon that has had the greatest impact on today's world is information and communication technology (ICT). It has thrown off balance the conventional perceptions of time and space and removed geographical barriers to the transmission of knowledge, ideas, and information.

Every other key phenomenon has to a very great extent flowed from the ICT revolution. Work habits and ways of doing business have changed drastically. Mobility (of persons, inventions, capital, etc.) has become the norm. Access to information has become a simple "click" affair. Staying *here* while being in direct communion with persons *over there* is no longer a miracle. Time is being saved, as information is transmitted at above breakneck speed, and knowledge sharing has become an international business.

Globalization—described as a "set of processes by which the events, decisions and activities that occur in a particular part of the planet have significant repercussions on other places, on other individuals and on other communities" (Groupe de Lisbonne, 1995, cited in Lopez Rupérez, 2003: 250)—has become both the driving force and the end result of it all. It is common these days to speak of the entire world as one global village, and to maintain that there is no opting out of membership of that village.

What is most striking about the acceleration of history is change, as a permanent feature of today's world and also as a phenomenon that is itself changing at a highly accelerated pace. In short, the acceleration of history implies that the factors that in the past made for a relatively slow pace of societal evolution have been replaced by factors that now make for relatively fast societal acceleration.

For Africa the acceleration of history presents both opportunities and dangers. The opportunities lie in the fact that, if well prepared, Africa can

easily “buy into” ongoing developments (especially ICT) and harness these for its accelerated development. The dangers, on the other hand, lie in Africa’s being ill-prepared for full membership in the global village currently emerging.

3. ACCELERATED HISTORY, EDUCATION, AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The fundamental function of all types of education is acculturation, while the best-known saying concerning education is that “it is preparation for life as well as life itself.” This is why traditional forms of African education sought to inculcate the norms and values, as well as the life skills, of pre-colonial African societies. It is for the same reason that colonial education in Africa emphasized “assimilationist” values and colonial economy-oriented skills. That was also why postcolonial reform efforts were in perpetual search of a form of education that was relevant to the exigencies of Africa’s nation-building enterprises.

Acculturation in a world in which history is *evolving* cannot be the same in a world in which the course of history is *accelerating*. The evolutionary nature of the past meant that societal conditions were relatively stable and the life skills to be inculcated by the educational system were predictable. By contrast, the accelerated nature of today’s world means that change (both permanent and accelerated) has become the only predictable fact of life. Thus, the life skills needed for coping with rapid changes cannot be predetermined, nor can they be of a categorical nature.

The most fundamental effect of the acceleration of history, and of the resultant globalization, is the emergence of “knowledge-based economies,” which are well described in a recent World Bank (2003) publication:

A knowledge-based economy relies primarily on the use of ideas rather than physical abilities and the applications of technology rather than the transformation of raw materials or the exploitation of cheap labour. It is an economy in which knowledge is created, acquired, transmitted, and used more effectively by individuals, enterprises, organizations and communities to promote economic and social development.

Knowledge economies have been built on a solid foundation of learning societies and learning organizations, thus on social structures in which knowledge is both a prime tool and a valued product. They are also structures that continuously generate, share, and use knowledge for accelerating the pace of socioeconomic development.

Of greater relevance to education and school curriculum are the changing requirements of the “world of work,” a term that should not be confused

with the world of paid employment. These requirements place a strong premium on the skills outlined in Box 22-1 below.

The requirements of the world of work have also led to a reappraisal of “what knowledge is of the greatest worth,” which is an age-old question in education. The general consensus today is summed up in Box 22-2 below.

With particular reference to curriculum development, the emergence of knowledge-based economies has led to radical paradigm shifts along the lines illustrated in Table 22-1. There has been a shift from fixed curriculum to more flexible curricular frameworks, from a focus on teaching to learning, from the transmission and acquisition of information to a constructivist approach to knowledge, from the acquisition of skills needed to continued learning throughout life, from categorized subject content to a more interdisciplinary approach to integrated areas, etc. (Obanya, 2003).

4. GETTING AFRICA ON THE NEW CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TRACK

Global competitiveness, the capability of every nation of the world to remain internationally competitive in the global knowledge-based economy, is a requirement of the accelerated history phenomenon of the present millennium. Education, and in particular the curriculum, is expected to be a prime contributor to a nation’s capacity for global competitiveness.

Box 22-1. Life skills requirements of a knowledge-based economy

- **Knowledge:** as versatility and flexibility, not simply as the ability to store and reproduce facts and figures
- **Communication skills:** capacity to appreciate the views and feelings of others, to convey one’s own feelings and opinions in ways that help to sustain personal and working relationships
- **Adaptability:** a willingness to venture into novel situations—new ideas, novel working and living conditions, new areas of knowledge, new tools for working and thinking
- **Creativity:** a strong drive to go beyond the well-trodden path
- **Team spirit:** an acceptance of the principles of group cohesiveness, the team being more important than any of its individual members
- **Literacy,** in the comprehensive sense: prose, quantities, graphics, spatial-analysis, interpretation, use in communication
- **IT-fluency,** a mastery of ICT as a tool for thinking, research, communication, and working
- **Learning as a way of life,** a frame of mind that is the cornerstone of life-long and life-wide learning

<p><i>Box 22-2. Knowledge generally considered worthwhile today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific subject-matter and skill-based knowledge are known to have a short shelf life; they therefore have to yield to fundamental skills (language, mathematical reasoning, scientific and social inquiry), technical skills (analysis, communication, etc.), and learning-to-learn skills • Factual knowledge is also less important (i.e., more difficult to transfer to life and further learning situations) than overarching knowledge • Intrapersonal skills (as typified in the age-old maxim, “Know thyself!”) are to be stressed • Interpersonal skills must be developed to enable the individual to function in socially and professionally heterogeneous work settings • Specialization is likely to lead to a dead-end in a knowledge economy; hence more emphasis should be placed on broad-based knowledge that is concerned more with processes, methodologies, and personal initiative (Obanya, 2003)
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To reduce the chances of Africa’s being swallowed up by the knowledge-intensive forces of globalization, curriculum work will be needed on the following five fronts:

- policy directions;
- research and related academic activities;
- technical curriculum and materials development activities;
- teaching–learning support activities; and
- classroom-level activities.

Policy directions should begin with a return to the curriculum drawing board. This is because education in Africa has to become more responsive to the demands of the present, in which history has been accelerated. Basic curriculum questions will need to be addressed, but these have to flow from basic educational questions, such as

Table 22-1. Changing trends in curriculum development.

Old emphasis	New emphasis
1. Teaching	1. Learning
2. Inputs	2. Outcomes
3. Schooling	3. Lifelong Learning
4. Central control	4. Shared control
5. Categorized learning	5. Integrated learning
6. Rote learning	6. Applied learning
7. Curriculum as documents	7. Curriculum as process
8. Curriculum as subjects	8. Curriculum as framework

Source: Adapted from Tawil (2003: 11–18).

- the need for Africa to survive—by becoming political and socially robust;
- the need for Africa to belong—by becoming better able to partake of the benefits of globalization;
- the need for Africa to become an equal partner in today’s global village—by contributing to the global knowledge database.

In education and curriculum terms, the required policy directions would be the product of participatory situational analysis, leading to the institutionalization of educational policy dialogues. These dialogues should become the major feature of a democratized education policy development process. Taking our bearings by current trends in Africa, there are several education and curriculum issues impeding the emergence of knowledge societies, and knowledge economies in Africa will have to be addressed as policy issues. This would require general policy guidelines on the following 10 issues:

- the high incidence of illiteracy;
- the poor state at all levels of formal education in terms of access, quality, equity, and efficiency;
- the low level of technological development (including ICT);
- the poor state of both intra- and inter-African communication;
- the poor level of education funding;
- the prevalence of a curriculum development philosophy tilted towards the “old emphasis” areas outlined in Table 22-1;
- the nonprofessionalization of teaching and of relevant educational services;
- the pervasive influence of examinations;
- the domineering trend towards selectivity, in place of education for all; and
- the phenomenon of “curricular irony,” that is, curricula that have remained both overloaded and noncomprehensive.

Research and related academic issues are concerned with the role of academics in ensuring that curriculum work in Africa contributes to getting the region onto today’s curriculum development fast track. This will involve a combination of the following:

- evolving more knowledge-intensive theories of curriculum development;
- dismantling existing curriculum development courses in higher institutions, instead moving closer to the “process conception” of curriculum (see Table 22-1);
- teaching by example, by mounting experimental curriculum projects that seek to promote the prevailing paradigm shift illustrated in Table 22-1;
- developing research projects concerning the changing demands of the world of work and their impact on the school curriculum;
- engaging in transdisciplinary activities that involve the analysis of the social dynamics of today’s acceleration of history;
- being fully involved in national curriculum development efforts and education policy dialogues and using the experience as “regalia” for teaching and research; and

- championing the course of genuine curriculum reforms at the tertiary level.
- Technical work on curriculum and material development** is concerned with the activities of national and subnational curriculum development agencies. Going back to the curriculum drawing board remains the starting point here. The drawing board activity should address education as a systemic whole, both horizontally and physically (see Figure 22-1). In dealing with each level of education, concerted efforts would be needed for a move towards the new emphasis areas outlined in Table 22-1. Each level of education would do well to emphasize specific curriculum imperatives for a knowledge society, the harbinger of a knowledge economy:
- Basic education:* an integrated curriculum that aims at awakening talents and potentials while emphasizing sound foundations in literacy and numeracy, together with context-specific life skills and learning-how-to-learn as the modus operandi. This curriculum philosophy is in keeping with the Jomtien and Dakar declarations on Education for All, and they apply to both formal and nonformal learning situations.
- Secondary education:* an integrated curriculum that aims at full personality development of the adolescent, emphasizing the three “preps”:
- personality development;
 - preparation for life; and
 - preparation for formal higher education.

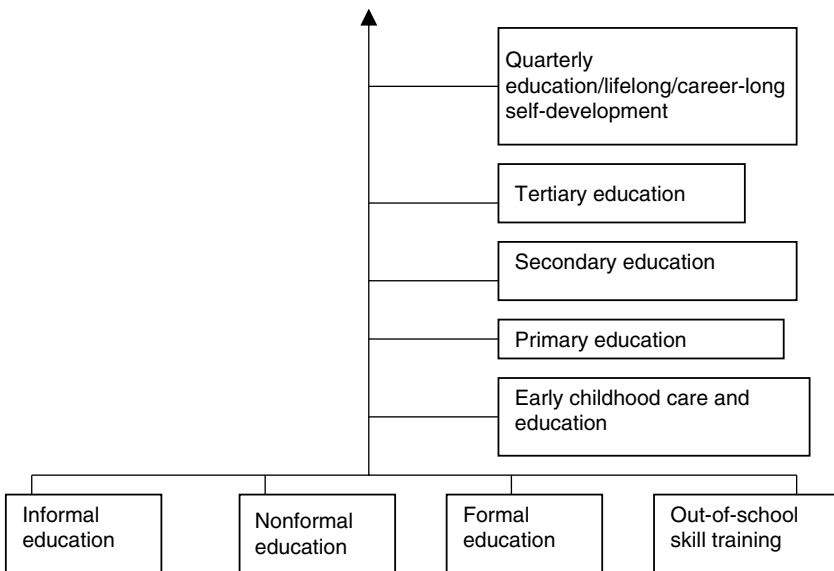


Figure 22-1. The horizontal and vertical dimensions of lifelong education.

This would involve far-reaching transformations of existing practices:

- consolidation of literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills in the early years;
- integrated curricula that eliminate the pervading overload of existing curricula;
- wider curriculum exposure for all learners, eliminating premature specialization;
- technical–vocational education as an integral part of everyone’s curriculum exposure;
- counseling as core curriculum activity, and interwoven into normal school activities; and
- using the curriculum to inculcate the generic skills listed in Box 22-1.

Technical and vocational education: This would involve the elimination of dead-end curriculum, which leads to vocational frustration and has no place in the knowledge-intensive workplace of the current millennium. Instead, the three-tier curriculum endorsed by successive world conferences on technical–vocational education should be put in place, namely:

- a sound general education, skills of learning how to learn, personality development;
- general technical education; and
- initiation into specific vocations.

This is the type of technical and vocational education that makes for flexibility in the learner, which in turn makes adaptability and market-responsive learning possible.

Higher education: Systematic planning and management of curriculum at the tertiary level would be one sure way of ensuring “value addition” in Africa’s investments in that subsector. There is a great need to ensure that higher education becomes as high as it should be by promoting a curriculum that emphasizes not simply subject disciplines and the professions but also (and more particularly) the generic skills outlined in Box 22-1. In all cases, subject-matter knowledge should become one of the major tools for inculcating these skills.

“Value-added” tertiary curriculum would also involve concrete action along the following lines:

- a foundation period of inculcating and consolidating the generic skills outlined in Box 22-1;
- a period of attachment to, and close study of, the real work sector (the domain of the entrepreneur, preferably small-scale businesses and the nonformal economic sector);
- in-built exposure to the evolution of the world around us, especially the accelerated developments in places outside Africa;
- cross-disciplinary/thematic/integrated studies (*no specialization*) at the first degree level;
- problem-solving/project design and execution/teamwork as the dominant methods of teaching and learning; and
- a first degree as prerequisite to all professional courses.

Teaching–learning support services: It is necessary here to draw attention to the layers of perceptions of a curriculum by various actors in a nation’s educational system (see Table 22-2).

It is always necessary to ensure that the other perceptions of the curriculum that impact on what teachers teach and what learners learn is as close as possible to the ideal. That is the main rationale for appropriate teaching–learning support service. In the knowledge-intensive curriculum that our times demand, teaching–learning support services would be considered adequate and appropriate if

- practicing teachers are fully involved in the curriculum development process;
- the system allows autonomy and flexibility at school- and classroom-levels;
- there is a built-in monitoring and assessment mechanism that uses data generated at the school-level for decision-making on the curriculum;
- experienced and qualified teachers are available at the school-level to mentor and train inexperienced and less qualified teachers;
- efforts at the school-level are adequately supported by supplementary materials and activities from teachers’ resources centers; and
- there is official recognition for innovation and creativity.

Classroom-level activities: Again, there is a need to bring the interpreted, the executed, and the learned curriculum as close as possible to the ideal curriculum. A sure way of doing so is for classroom practices to move away from “telling” to guiding (see Table 22-3).

Table 22-2. Perceptions of curricula.

Perceptions	Description	Actors
I. The ideal curriculum	The ideal in every sense of the term	Politicians, researchers, curriculum developers
II. The intended curriculum	The curriculum as translated into documents	Curriculum developers, textbook authors
III. The interpreted curriculum	The written curriculum as interpreted by teachers	Teachers
IV. The implemented curriculum	The curriculum as prepared by teachers to be executed	Teachers
V. The executed curriculum	The curriculum as put into practice by teachers and learners	Teachers, learners
VI. The experienced curriculum	The curriculum as perceived by teachers and learners	Teachers, learners
VII. The assessed curriculum	Part of the curriculum that is assessed	Teachers, learners
VIII. The learned curriculum	What the learners have learned from the executed curriculum	Learners

Source: After Boersma and Looy (1996) as cited in Pieters (2002: 60).

Table 22-3. Telling versus guiding as teaching–learning strategies.

Key element	Telling	Guiding
Material	Prescribed textbook, followed logically from A to Z	A wider variety of materials (text and nontext) Out-of-class activities to complement classroom work
Teacher	Does most of the talking A quiet classroom as evidence of learning	Sets the scene and engages learners in challenging activities Makes maximum use of learners’ prior knowledge and special skills Maximizes learner involvement
Learner	Listens, takes teacher-dictated notes, talks only when so directed by the teacher	Contributes to classroom organization to suit different purposes Also initiates activities and challenges the teacher Takes notes in an analytical manner
Teaching–learning process	Frontal teaching, memorization, and rote learning Emphasis on mere facts, figures, recitation	Wider variety in the classroom Flexible classroom organization Analytical and creative thinking promoted
Outcomes	Regurgitation considered as knowledge Teacher “coverage” of the syllabus	Increased love for learning More likelihood of hands-on experience Creativity often rewarded

Source: Obanya (1999: 169).

5. CONCLUSION

The central message of this chapter has been that globalization is an irreversible reality. The same can be said of the knowledge-based economy and the knowledge-driven society to which globalization has given rise.

Africa has to strive to become an integral, full (and *not* a marginal) member of the emerging global village; it would not be in Africa’s interest to have a world of unequal opportunities between the globalizers and the globalized. Action by Africa on the political and the socioeconomic fronts

is surely needed if Africa is to survive, belong, and be a contributor (and *not* simply a recipient and peripheral member of the so-called global village).

Education should be central to ensuring Africa's belonging to the knowledge-driven world in this period of accelerated history. This means that educational development in Africa must respond in an accelerated manner to the demands of the new life and world of work of the present millennium.

The curriculum of the subdiscipline of pedagogy that deals with "education down-to-earthness" is a major instrument for affecting the much-needed accelerated educational change in Africa. The challenges for curriculum specialists lie on the five fronts outlined in the foregoing. The clarion call is for us to take on the challenge and to ensure that education in Africa contributes to our competitiveness in a globalized world.

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Chapter 23

EDUCATIONAL ACCESS FOR GIRLS: THE CASE OF KANO STATE OF NIGERIA

Sabo A. Indabawa

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we examine issues of access to education for three socially disadvantaged groups. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first seeks to clarify four key terms. Section two appraises the state of access to education at all levels and forms by the identified target groups. The final section recommends ideas, remedial measures, and strategies that may help to widen access to education. These recommendations could help to minimize the incidence of gender disparities and the trend of neglecting other disadvantaged groups, especially the nomads and out-of-school children (or street children) in Kano State. The objective of this chapter is to raise issues relevant to educational policy and practice in the State. This presentation is also intended to stimulate discussion about the need to adopt best educational practices that may help to widen access to modern education for all in Kano, in particular, and Nigeria as a whole. As far as possible, the topic is treated in a practical and non-technical manner to stress what is feasible. Kano is used as a case study here not simply because the author comes from there but due to the special relationship that Michael Omolewa has with the ancient city-state.

According to the 2003 estimate, Kano has an area of 20,131 square kilometers. Its population in 1991 was 5.8 million and is now estimated at 7.5 million, with more than 50% female. The predominant religion is Islam (99%), and Christianity and other religions constitute the remaining 1%. The population is made up of ethnic groups of which Hausa-Fulani comprises 95% and others, 5%. The economy is built mainly on trade, commerce in hides and skin, textiles, and agro-products and services. Kano is the second most industrialized state next to Lagos. The adult literacy rate is 52% (male 70%, female 30% in Western terms, and 85% in Arabic). The

pupil enrollment in 1996 was 80.5% in primary schools and 71% in secondary schools. In 2001 there were 2,600 primary schools and 321 secondary schools. There are 9 postsecondary educational institutions: 2 universities, 1 polytechnic, 2 colleges of education, 1 school of nursing, 1 school of health technology, 1 school of physiotherapy, and 1 school of hygiene (Les Editions, 2002; Federal Ministry of Education, 1989; Indabawa, 1994).

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Let us attempt to define some of the major concepts that have guided this discussion. Selected for discussion in this context are the concepts of access to education, gender, and disadvantaged groups.

2.1 Access to education

Widening access to education has been used in this context to mean reaching out to something with some degree of ease or minimum difficulty. Access is often associated with basic social needs, such as food, health, water, and education. In educational discourse, access to education means getting an opportunity for education and reaching out unhindered to educational resources, including knowledge, physical, and other cognate facilities. According to Obanya (2003), access should cover five fundamental requirements: (1) getting enrolled in school or educational programs, (2) regular attendance, (3) making steady progress through all stages of learning, (4) completion of the learning cycle, and (5) successful learning achievement. In all five, males at all levels far outnumber girls and women in Nigeria's educational system.

Although access to education is a universal issue, it also has some local and primordial connotations. Hence, citizens are expected to have access to education in a society as part of their entitlement of citizenship. The issues of what type, form, or mode of education and to what extent they are offered are open to debate. However, even the United Nations, world governments, and global development partners, as well as civil society organizations, seek to ensure "a right to basic (quality) education" for all (UNESCO, 2003). It has been argued that basic education is a description of the type of education without which a human being will not be able to take full advantage of the socioeconomic and political opportunities that abound in society or live a more socially meaningful and fulfilling life in society (Fafunwa, 1991).

2.2 Gender disparities

Gender refers to the social categorization of a person as male or female. An essential element of this concept is that of role and responsibilities. Gender does not simply refer to females or women (Indabawa, 1994). In defining gender roles and responsibilities in Nigeria, issues of disparity often arise. Associated with this is the problem of exclusion. As practiced in Nigeria, males seem to have better chances than females. For example, in terms of access to education, the question that has been repeatedly raised is: Why do more males receive educational benefits than do their female counterparts in almost all parts of the world? The answer to such a question will vary (UNESCO, 2003).

2.3 Disadvantaged groups

These are persons who, for personal or social reasons, do not get their fair share of humane treatment in the society. For example, most disadvantaged persons cannot take maximum advantage of educational resources available in society. As for why they do not, this question is often left unanswered. There are several types of persons who fall under this rubric (Akinpelu, 1994). However, women (or, generally, females), nomads, and street children are among the most prominent. Others are the poor, the sick and destitute, refugees, children in war situations, women and the elderly in conflict situations, ethnic minorities, the physically disabled, the malnourished, and the orphaned and stigmatized, or socially ostracized people. In this chapter our focus is on why many of these persons experience some form of denial regarding access to modern formal or non-formal education.

3. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Access to education is universally narrow. In fact, formal education has tended to be “pyramidal in structure” (Okedara, 1983). Consequently, several persons are excluded from it. By 2000, there were more males in all levels of school (from pre-primary to tertiary) than females. But the most alarming problem is that there are more persons in the world that have never had any (formal) educational experience than those who have had it. Indeed, the world today has over 1 billion persons who are not able to read, write, or communicate in any language (Fordham, 2000). This trend has not changed in spite of the global declaration on *Education for All* (EFA) by 2000.

The trend of global exclusion of persons from education has its regional dimensions. For example, Asia, Africa, and Latin America suffer most from

lack of access to education. In terms of numbers, rural Africa has the largest proportion of persons who have never had any access to education. More females are affected by this negative development, a reality that is reflected in every African community. For instance, in a study on access to education for females in Kano and Oyo states of Nigeria, 1976–1991, it was found that more males enrolled at all levels of education than females (Indabawa, 1994). The picture has been no different in other parts of Nigeria thus far (Obanya, 2003).

Another dimension of gender disparity lies in the types of courses and subjects that females pursue. Although there is no scientific evidence that females were unable to pursue studies in the sciences, mathematics, and technology disciplines, the number of females in these disciplines has always been minimal. Consequently, there is a “trickle down effect” of females’ ability to pursue professional careers in engineering and medicine, among others that are dominated by males (Abdallah, 1988). Similarly, even in adult literacy and other non-formal education programs, female participants tend to number fewer than males in Kano and Oyo States (Indabawa, 1994).

3.1 Why are females excluded?

A fundamental question that has been raised over the years is: Why are females less involved? Scholars have advanced several reasons to explain the phenomenon. Some of these (according to Ali, 1988; Akinpelu, 1994; Osilunu, 1994; Indabawa, 1998 & 1999; Obanya, 2003; UNESCO, 2003) are:

- Traditional practices inhibiting females from active participation; for example, early marriage and hawking are practices prevalent in most northern states of Nigeria.
- Poor policy provisions for the effective mainstreaming of females in education. Little is said on this in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 1989). The *Blueprint on Women’s Education* of 1989 remains a mere declaration at this point (1989).
- Poor provision of basic educational facilities for females.
- Poor attitude of parents and husbands towards female education.
- Poverty of persons whose responsibility it is to pay for female education.
- High cost of educational programs.
- Inadequate government support and patronage for female education.
- Absence of the right administrative structures to deal with an efficient management of female education.
- Irrelevance of formal education curriculum to people’s real life expectations.

- Poor synergy between school and work (or employment).
- Class and gender discrimination against poor females, prevalent in all sectors of society.
- Lack of sustainable female education programs and activities, as well as inadequate involvement of civil society in the promotion of female education.
- Females' personal problems (e.g., health issues), which affect their ability to participate in education.

In view of this list, the question is: What is to be done? We shall address this question below in our discussion of remedial measures and strategies.

3.2 Other disadvantaged groups

As indicated earlier, apart from females, there are other disadvantaged persons who lack access to education. Nomads and out-of-school children (or street children) and youths are among the most noticeable groups.

3.2.1 Nomads

Nomads are people who “migrate in search of livelihood within a community, a nation or across international boundaries” (Akinpelu, 1994: 163). Of the 9.3 million nomads found in Nigeria in 1993, two groups are most prominent: the Fulani, who were reported to be 5.3 million, and the fishermen (and women), who numbered 2.8 million. The focus here is on the Fulani, who are found throughout the northern states of Nigeria, including Kano.

Although education is an essential tool for human development, the nomadic people were severely disadvantaged in terms of access to it. For example, only 0.26% and 20% of the pastoral nomads and fishermen (and women), respectively, were literate in 1993 (Akinpelu, 1994). Of the total number of nomads, 3.1 million were children of school age and the rest were adults.

In an attempt to mainstream the nomads into national life, certain policy measures have been instituted since the formulation of the National Policy on Education in 1977. A blueprint on nomadic education was produced in 1987. The National Commission for Nomadic Education came into being in 1989. Between 1989 and 1993, 661 nomadic primary schools with an enrollment of 49,982 children were established in 24 states of the Federation (Akinpelu, 1994). The blueprint specifically states that nomadic education should have both short-term and long-term objectives.

The short-term goal should lead to the acquisition of the enabling skills of reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as an outlook informed by a familiarity with basic science. These skills should help the nomads deal more effectively with their problems as well as to improve their relationship

with government agencies and their sedentary neighbors. On the other hand, the long-term objectives are (Abdullahi, 1988: 42):

- (a) improvement of income-earning capacities;
- (b) improvement of livestock products, such as milk, meat, and hides and skins;
- (c) better marketing skills to sell their products;
- (d) appreciation of the need to use banks and other credit facilities;
- (e) appreciation of the aims and functions of cooperatives;
- (f) production of skilled Fulani professionals, such as doctors, nurses, and teachers; and
- (g) acquisition and use of functional skills of raising families and maintaining households.

To institutionalize the envisaged values of nomadic education, three types of school system have been used: (1) a regular school system for the settled nomads, (2) on-site schools for semisedentary nomads, and (3) mobile schools for nomads who migrate in search of livelihood.

In Kano State nomadic education activities are concentrated in those local government areas where there is a considerable presence of the Fulani. Indeed, the dominant approach of program provision is the regular school form mainly at primary education level. Both the National Commission for Nomadic Education (which has a State Center) and the State Ministry of Education are mutually engaged in the program. However, one easily notices the seeming neglect of the program's adult education component, which is supposed to be handled jointly by the Commission and the State Agency for Mass Education. Yet there are more illiterate adults among the Fulani than there are school-age children.

Generally, nomadic education efforts are dwarfed by a myriad of obstacles. The most common of these are (Abdullahi, 1988; Akinpelu, 1994):

- lack of a comprehensive national policy;
- initial misgivings (or apprehension) of the Fulani about the program;
- difficulties related to program delivery methods;
- problems concerning the language of instruction;
- limitation of the program to primary education level;
- poor implementation of education policies, poor infrastructure, and inadequate mobilization of the nomads;
- lack of adequate research input, although some university centers exist in Jos, Maiduguri, Sokoto, and Port Harcourt;
- inadequacy of available funds for effective program implementation;
- neglect of the adult education component of the program;
- lack of adequate integration with and mobility to higher levels of education at secondary and postsecondary levels;
- irrelevant curriculum, that is, curriculum that does not reflect the existential realities of the nomads;

- problems related to adequacy of schools, school places for potential students, and instructional materials, as well as qualified nomadic education teachers.

There are several other obstacles that can be identified through critical research and evaluation. Some of these problems may tend to be unique to the social, cultural, and political environment of northern Nigeria.

3.2.2 Street children

Street children constitute yet another disadvantaged group. They are found mostly in urban centers and have been abandoned by parents who fail to take responsibility for them. They are mostly out-of-school although some of them are of school age.

A survey of out-of-school children and youths conducted in 1993 under the auspices of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the World Bank indicated that they number over 9 million (FGN/WB, 1993). Kano has a high number of out-of-school children, but not street children. The armies of children seen on the city streets are called *almajiai* (beggars). But they are not abandoned children. At worst, they are neglected children, though their parents maintain that they are sent to Quranic instruction “*fi sabilil alah*” (for the sake of God). However, many believe that the parents try to find escape routes from their socioeconomic difficulties by forcing their children into begging on the streets, leaving them to fend for themselves. There is a seeming failure of the Quranic *mallams* operating the system, for they cannot control the children. In fact, many *mallams* believe that by begging the children are engaged in an important part of the learning process. Yet what is worrisome is whether the begging will disrupt society. Indeed, it is common knowledge that it does. The *mallams*, too, are said to be making huge financial gains from the practice. Pedagogically, educators are also concerned about the huge waste of time involved in begging, in addition to the possible physical exhaustion of the children, which leaves little or no room for any meaningful or effective learning. The problem, then, is whether the Quranic educational system could not be better organized.

4. REMEDIAL MEASURES

Having analyzed the issues of gender disparity in access to modern education, it is now pertinent to suggest some remedial measures that may assist in the restoration of some cultural and social equity in society. The measures suggested here are not prescriptive; they are meant merely to be discussed and refined for optimum effect.

4.1 On gender disparities and education

In Kano, as in many other places in northern Nigeria, there is evidence of unequal representation of both sexes at all levels of education. Females do not participate in adult and non-formal education processes on an equal footing with their male counterparts. Therefore, the following suggestions involve measures that are applicable to all levels of education:

1. Minimize the effect of early marriage and girl-hawking practices, if possible, through enforced policies. This is necessary since such practices reduce the chances of more females gaining access to education. It should be remembered that Sheikh Ottoman Dan Folio (RA), in his numerous works and those of his immediate successors, underscored the necessity of educating females to the maximum level.
2. A deliberate step should be taken to increase female enrollment in primary secondary and tertiary schools, as well as adult and nonformal education programs.
3. Increase the rate of girls transiting from primary six to junior secondary school and to further levels.
4. Increase female participation in science education at all levels to the ratio of 60:40 by 2015.
5. Establish more schools and centers for married women. At least one married women's primary, secondary, and non-formal education center should be established and fully funded and equipped in each of the local government areas of Kano State.
6. Boost female science education and ultimately female participation in the professions; the number of girls' science secondary schools should be increased to 20 by 2015.
7. Abolish all school fees for females enrolled in any government-sponsored education program.
8. Strengthen existing female schools and provide relevant facilities and equipment.
9. The State College of Education (COE) should mount a special National Certificate in Education (NCE) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs for female science teachers.
10. The government should make a special request for the training of female science teachers to Bayero University, Kano (BUK), the Kano University of Technology (KUT), and Federal College of Education (FCE), thereby calling on them to pay special attention to teacher education program provisions.
11. All local government councils should also be made to institutionalize the award of scholarships and grants to all females participating in secondary and postsecondary education programs. The grants should be enough to pay the fees and costs of their participation in the programs.

Indeed, the new Kano All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) government committed itself to doing this from the day of its inauguration on May 29, 2003.

12. Adequate instructional materials should be provided to all female institutions.
13. The State Ministry of Education should commence the deliberate renewal of the curriculum of female educational institutions through its Kano Educational Department (KERD). This should be done in collaboration with the Faculty of Education at BUK, the FCE, and the COE, alumni associations, as well as all other relevant role players and stakeholders. The goal of this undertaking should be to enrich the curriculum and make it more relevant to the realities and needs of the females and of the people generally.
14. The female education unit of KERD should be strengthened and empowered to discharge its duties more effectively. If possible, a female education officer should be posted in each of the Zonal Education Offices in the State. Female education needs to be better coordinated.
15. All female graduates of the school system should be given automatic employment to create a desirable synergy between females, education career aspirations, and work. There should be no female graduate left unemployed. This will make education and participation in it increasingly more meaningful and attractive.
16. To make access to education easier, a Kano State Institute of Distance Education should be established. It would offer secondary and diploma-level programs through distance learning. This would enable working females to take full advantage of educational programs without much disruption of work or family obligations. The modalities for setting up the institute should be worked out jointly between the State government and relevant tertiary institutions in the State.
17. The government should undertake a serious and sustainable mobilization of all nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and the community leaders and youth groups in support of female education in the State. An interministerial and expert committee should be established to undertake this task, perhaps with the support of the British Council and UNICEF, two agencies that are already engaged in such efforts.
18. Technical donor support should be sought from interested parties within and outside the country in favor of female education.
19. Continuous research into and evaluation of female education should be mounted. This should be done collaboratively so as to involve both experts and practitioners in the field.
20. Efforts should also be intensified to undertake coordinated research into and documentation of female education so as to continuously

enrich policy-makers, especially in light of examples of best practices that can enrich or improve programs.

4.2 On nomadic education

To promote nomadic education activities for the enhancement of access to education in the State, the following steps are recommended:

1. Increase collaboration with the National Commission for Nomadic Education.
2. Identification and verification of the exact number of nomads in Kano.
3. Reassessment of existing nomadic education programs.
4. Promote nomadic education beyond the primary education level.
5. Undertake a massive drive for nomadic adult basic education and equivalency programs by the State Agency for Mass Education, which has gained worldwide recognition through two UNESCO programs. The Department of Adult Education and Community Services, the Department of Community Development and Adult Education, the School of Social and Rural Development, Kano State Polytechnic, and the National Commission for Nomadic Education should all take part in the implementation of the education policy.
6. Increase funding for existing nomadic formal and adult literacy schools and classes.
7. Adequately equip existing nomadic formal and adult literacy education schools and classes.
8. Mobilize the nomads to participate in education activities through massive awareness efforts using the language they understand and the traditional structures they trust.
9. Adopt a multimode approach to offering nomadic education programs. It will not be productive to run the system just as if it were part of the formal (normal) education system. More innovation and novelty are needed in the approach to the delivery of the programs than currently exists.
10. Steps should be taken to increase pupil enrollment in nomadic education programs. All should be involved in this process.
11. For maximum effect, the nomadic populations should be assisted with adequate pastures to allow them pursue their herding tasks with minimum ease. This should be integrated into the education package to make education even more attractive.
12. There is need for a review of the existing curriculum of nomadic education programs to make it more suitable to the target population.
13. Create mobility paths to further education for the nomads. This will be one of the best ways of helping the nomads to take interest in the

professions, such as teaching, medicine, engineering, accountancy, and architecture, among others.

14. As far as possible, it is necessary constantly to utilize the expertise of fellow nomads, especially the educated elite among them, in the implementation of their educational programs.

4.3 On out-of-school children

Since, as noted above, there are no street children in Kano, but only out-of-school children and youths (i.e., children that are not in formal schools), the following suggestions concern measures aimed at helping to widen access to education for them:

1. Assess the contemporary conditions of Quranic education in the State. This should be done with a view to making the system more efficient within a modern context. It may not be sufficient merely to integrate the new system into the existing one. This undertaking should include the actual listing and determination of the accurate numbers of pupils and teachers within each school.
2. It is necessary that there be constant training and retraining of the Quranic *mallams* (i.e., teachers) in modern pedagogical methods. This will prepare them for change and enable them to make use of newer methods and techniques of instructional delivery (Indabawa, 2000).
3. Provide assistance in locating Quranic schools at more suitable sites than those in which they are currently located.
4. Help to feed the Quranic learners. This may serve as an incentive for participation in basic education and should interest governments and donors, such as UNICEF. Indeed, the People's Democratic Party-led Government of Kano State (1999–2003) tried to do this with pupils of formal primary schools; the result was a huge enrollment of pupils which has helped to achieve the targets of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program, which in turn seeks to achieve the EFA target (Indabawa et al., 1991; Barry, 2000; FRN, 2001).
5. Strengthen existing financial and material support for Quranic education from the State government and donors, such as UNICEF.
6. Take concrete steps to inspire confidence among *mallams*, parents, and Quranic learners about the value of any external intervention, which seeks to reform the system; otherwise, there will always be intense resistance or a lack of adequate cooperation, which may lead to failure (Cook, 1999).
7. Pass legislation against child begging practices and pursue its strict enforcement.
8. Establish at least two model Quranic schools per local government. The model schools should be operated more efficiently and effectively.

Efforts should be intensified to link existing Quranic schools with the model schools. This will help to institutionalize the new approach and to create a learning path between Quranic schools and higher Islamic institutions.

9. Evolve more nonformal education programs to meet the educational needs of youths. Emphasis should be placed on vocational skills training that will prepare youths for work roles and for the future (OECD/UIS, 2003). The State Agency for Mass Education should run a youth-out-of-school center in each local government in the State. Youths who undergo such vocational training should be assisted in finding employment. It may be appropriate to provide soft loans and financial support to such persons.
10. Continuous research and evaluation work should be conducted into youths and their educational needs, as well as into the efficacy of the training they receive.
11. The government and all role players and stakeholders should take youths' problems more seriously and commit adequate attention and resources to their education.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter attempted to examine the issues of access to education in the context of Kano, one of Nigeria's most populated states. Yet the issues raised are generic in nature and apply to most parts of Nigeria, especially the northern states. It sought to stimulate discussion on gender disparities and the treatment of other disadvantaged groups in terms of access to modern education, formal and nonformal. It has been argued that females, nomads, and out-of-school children and youths face severe deprivation regarding access to modern education. Therefore, to compensate for this and create more equitable circumstances, the groups deserve special attention and serious consideration, especially regarding the government provision of education. To implement this, a set of measures has been proposed. It is up to policy-makers, political leaders, religious leaders, and stakeholders in the education sector in Kano to confront the daunting challenges of making education more accessible to all.

It is in the context of widening access to education for all that one recalls the significant contributions Michael Omolewa has made to Kano. Of these, we mention only two. First, he single-handedly helped to introduce the first bachelor's degree program in adult education in the northern part of Nigeria, namely the B.Ed. (Adult Education) at Bayero University, Kano (Omolewa, 2001). It was initiated in October 1988, and Michael Omolewa not only vetted it for commencement but also acted as the first external

examiner who certified the first graduates in 1991. The Department of Adult Education has now grown in all dimensions. It has produced thousands of highly trained adult educators, trainers, and teachers, who are now helping the State government, NGOs, and the private sector in Kano and the surrounding northern states to widen access to education for more people. This pace-setting and pioneering effort on Michael Omolewa's part has set such a shining example that four more programs in adult education have developed at the University of Maiduguri, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the University of Jos, and Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto. It is no exaggeration to claim that if Michael Omolewa had not set this example in Kano, the newer departments may never have come on line with their own programs. This is an outstanding contribution to widening access to modern education for all.

Michael Omolewa did not rest satisfied with the introduction of these degree programs in adult education. He continued to support the Kano Department of Adult Education and Community Services in numerous ways. For instance, he directly trained almost all the academic staff of the Kano department, leading some faculty members to acquire master's and doctoral degrees. Furthermore, in all his efforts to promote education elsewhere in Nigeria, he has never forgotten the Kano department. Doubtless that is why we have now also emerged as champions in our own right in university adult education training, research, and community consulting services.

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WIDENING ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OPTION

Clement Imhabekhai

1. INTRODUCTION

The first university in Nigeria was established in 1948; by the end of 2002, the number of universities in Nigeria had risen to 51. In spite of the tremendous increase in the number of universities, there appears to be limited access for the teeming population hungry for university education. In this chapter we therefore trace the efforts that have been made by governments, private institutions, and individuals in increasing access to university education and show that these efforts have been unable to satisfy the demand for high quality university education. We favor the establishment of the National Open University in Nigeria because we believe the program will create greater access to university education for all categories of people in different locations at a lower emotional and economic price. We recommend that the National Open University be adequately provided for in terms of funds, infrastructural and instructional facilities, and workforce for it to succeed. We also recommend networking with both local and international agencies relevant to its activities, as well as effective mobilization so as to develop positive attitudes towards the program and its products by potential employers in the marketplace and Nigerian society in general.

It is the desire of every nation to develop the needed workforce for the social, economic, political, and technological transformation of the nation. This is why each nation, whether developing or developed, allocates a large proportion of its resources to the development of its people through education and training at all levels of education, particularly through higher education. University education is intended to develop the highly skilled workforce needed to propel the nation's continued growth and development. The objectives of university education in Nigeria can be achieved when universities are able to:

- (a) intensify and diversify their programs for the development of a highly skilled workforce within the context of the needs of the nation;
- (b) design professional course contents to reflect the nation’s requirements; and
- (c) offer, as part of a general program for all around improvement in university education, general study courses, such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism (FME, 1998).

When these are achieved, social and economic development will follow.

The desire to develop an appropriate workforce for its activities prompted the colonial government in Nigeria to establish the first university in Nigeria in 1948—the University of Ibadan. Since then, the number of universities has continued to rise such that by 1970 there were six universities. By 1998, the number was 37 and by the end of 2002, it had increased to 51 universities. In the same vein, enrollment has been rising steadily. According to Okebukola (2002), enrollment in Nigerian universities has been growing steadily over past 54 years from an initial enrollment of 210 in 1948 at the University College, Ibadan, to 23,000 students in 1962 enrolled at six universities. By 1996, the total number of universities stood at 37 with a student population of 234,581. As of 2001–2002 academic year, total enrollment was 500,370.

2. DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF THE UNIVERSITY IN NIGERIA

Despite the phenomenal rise in the number of universities and the size of enrollment, it appears that a greater proportion of those seeking placement in university education do not have access. There is a wide gap between demand for and supply of university education. The unsatisfied demand is astronomically high, as is evidenced by the data in Table 24-1.

The data present a bleak picture. A small percentage of applicants who sought admissions into universities in Nigeria were granted access. Although not all applicants are qualified for admission, the overall performance on the University Matriculation Examination (UME) conducted

Table 24-1. Number of applications and admissions in Nigerian universities from 1995–1996 to 2000–2001 academic sessions.

Year	Applications	Admissions	% Admission
1995–1996	508,280	32,473	6.4
1996–1997	472,362	76,430	16.2
1997–1998	419,807	72,791	17.3
2000–2001	550,399	60,718	11.0

Source: Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). In: Okebukola (2002:6).

by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is usually very poor. Not all candidates who obtain the passing mark of 200 gain admission to federal universities. Similarly, not all applicants to direct entry programs (holders of Diploma, Nigeria Certificate in Education [NCE], and allied qualifications) are admitted into universities.

The inability of many candidates who were successful on the UME to gain admission to Nigerian universities is accounted for by diverse policies. Access is not only restricted by stringent admission requirements and the number of institutions available, but it is also restricted to those who are eligible and can fit into existing places (UNESCO, 2000: 87). The federal government has an admission policy for admission into those institutions it owns. This policy, which is intended to ensure that candidates from every part of the country have access to placement in such institutions, stipulates that admissions into federal universities should be distributed as follows: merit (40%), catchments (30%), educationally less developed states (ELDS, 20%), and discretion (10%). The policy further stipulates a science/humanities admission ratio of 60:40 in conventional universities and 80:20 in technical universities (FME, 1998).

In the implementation of this policy, each university fixes a cutoff mark each year for admission into various disciplines. The cutoff mark for each discipline is a function of the number of candidates who chose the discipline and passed and the overall performance of candidates. In effect, then, passing the UME is not enough to gain admission; rather, what is decisive is the number of candidates who are to be admitted on merit. And, the catchments criterion of 30% is determined by the performance of candidates from the immediate locality of the university and the adjoining states assigned to it by JAMB. Adeyemi (2001: 317) identifies the introduction of catchments criterion in Nigeria as an admission criterion that is motivated by demand for increased access to and participation in university education by all sections of the country.

The ELDS criterion is applicable to states the federal government categorize as educationally disadvantaged. These states include all the 19 states in Northern Nigeria, as well as four states in the South, namely Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, and Rivers. Enrollment of indigenes from the ELDS in federally owned institutions is rather low. Consequently, if admissions were based on merit and catchments criterion alone, indigenes of ELDS would have very limited access to university education. The 10% discretion criterion is for the universities to meet admission requests from staff, friends of the universities, and other influential members of society.

Thus, while a candidate may perform very well, if his or her UME score falls short of the cutoff mark and he or she is not from the catchments area or an ELDS, and does not come into consideration for the discretion criterion for that year, he or she will be excluded from admission for that year.

For courses in high demand, cutoff marks are usually very high. For instance, the cutoff scores on UMEs for selected courses at the University of Benin, Nigeria, for 2001 and 2002 are given in Table 24-2.

These data show that a large number of candidates may qualify for admission, but because of limited spaces available, they cannot be offered admission and may have to wait another year or seek admission to available polytechnics, colleges of education, or—for those from affluent homes—go abroad for university education.

Although there is no institutional exclusion policy applied to Nigerian females, they do not participate as much as their male counterparts in university education. For instance, between 1988–1989 and 1999–2000 academic sessions, undergraduate enrollment for females at the University of Benin, Nigeria, ranged between 28.3% and 39.9%, while postgraduate female enrollments ranged between 20.7% and 39.0%. According to Okebukola (2002: 9), at those universities that provided data, 175,995 students are female out of the total population of 526,780. This is a clear 34% of the gross enrollment data, which shows that many females are excluded from participation in university education in Nigeria.

There is another category of people who cannot participate in university education for various reasons. This group consists of workers who, because of their jobs or employment, cannot afford to participate in full-time studies. Some workers often enroll in part-time degree programs, but a large majority cannot avail themselves of the opportunity offered by part-time

Table 24-2. Cutoff marks for selected courses of study, 2001 and 2002 University Matriculation Examinations.

Course of study	Cutoff score	
	2001	2002
Medicine	278	289
Dentistry	233	231
Pharmacy	261	265
Law	264	271
Chemical engineering	262	264
Civil engineering	236	246
Electrical/electronic engineering	270	278
Computer engineering	271	273
Mechanical engineering	265	271
Petroleum engineering	261	267
Computer science	243	257
Geology	249	257
Accounting	260	270
Business administration	258	268
Economics and statistics	260	268
Banking and finance	241	261
Political science and public administration	245	257

programs because the programs are highly commercialized and expensive. And, the various universities are often located in urban areas. Consequently, workers in rural areas and some urban areas quite distant from the locations of the universities cannot participate in these part-time programs. They are therefore denied access to university education, regardless of whether on a full-time or a part-time basis.

Attempts at widening access to groups that have been excluded from university education gave rise to different experiments and programs. Upon the founding of the University of Lagos in 1962, the institution was given a mandate as a city university to establish part-time programs to meet the needs of the city workers. According to Okebukola (2000: 6), the University of Lagos:

Provided courses in the humanities, social sciences, medicine, law, and engineering but as a city university, it also laid emphasis on the promotion of part-time courses specifically designed to enable young workers to obtain degrees relevant to business and industry while at work.

Cost excludes many would-be participants in part-time programs. This is because part-time courses are supposed to be self-financing as no statutory provisions are made for them by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The institutions providing the courses therefore have to charge tuition fees as high as they believe will be adequate to finance the programs. At the University of Benin, for instance, part-time programs leading to a Bachelor's degree in accounting, banking, and finance, a Bachelor of Public Administration, etc., charge a tuition fee of 20,000 naira per term. Also, part-time students who do not live in university towns incur huge transportation costs, especially when they have to travel every weekend for lectures. Some also incur additional costs for accommodations and other incidental needs.

Pre-degree programs have been established by different universities, particularly state-owned universities, as way of expanding access to university education. In the same vein, diploma programs are also run by some universities, and successful graduates can be offered admission into degree programs on a direct entry basis if they perform exceptionally on the diploma program examinations. The pre-degree and diploma programs are remedial in nature and serve the purpose of increasing the pool of potential candidates in various disciplines.

The desire to increase access to university education led to the establishment of satellite campuses in major Nigerian cities. The campuses were set up by conventional universities, especially state-owned universities, whose quest was driven more by commercial than academic concerns. It was seen as a glorious opportunity to exploit the large population of candidates who were seeking admission into universities but could not obtain

it due to a lack of space. These campuses were run by staff drawn mostly from among recent graduates with master's degrees, secondary school teachers with master's degrees, part-time lecturers from nearby higher institutions, and other professionals who ordinarily would not be qualified to teach in the parent universities. In some cases, higher degree programs in the social sciences, which were in great demand, particularly in business administration, accounting, banking and finance, etc., were offered by these satellite campuses in spite of the small number and low quality of their academic staff.

The exploitation and poor quality of programs offered by the satellite campuses were noticed by the government and individuals who cared about the quality of university education available to Nigerians. Consequently, the federal government banned the activities of satellite campuses and ordered their immediate closure. In the words of the Minister of Education, "satellite campuses had to be closed down to stop them from being a defrauding mechanism of people who want to have a good education" (Okpani, 2002: 1). To reiterate the federal government's resolve to stop the activities of satellite campuses, the Minister said: "The ban on satellite campuses which were polluting the quality of university education remains in force. Appropriate penalties will be applied to institutions found to be flouting this government order under any guise" (p. 1). It is therefore safe to assume that the era of satellite campuses has come and gone in Nigeria. The ban on satellite campuses closed access to university education to students who were already enrolled in the programs and to those who would have enrolled in the future. However, a viable alternative was created: the Open University.

Open university as a means of providing university education of high quality is a worldwide phenomenon. Open universities exist in developed and developing countries, such as Great Britain, the United States, China, Holland, India, and Pakistan. They are used in these countries to provide education and training to people who cannot leave their homes and employment to participate in full-time studies or who live so far away that they cannot take part in part-time programs being provided by conventional higher institutions. Programs at open universities are offered through correspondence courses, tutorials, seminars, workshops, television and radio broadcasts, and other mass communication media. Open Universities assist to widen access to education to people who are qualified for university education but cannot be accommodated for lack of space in existing universities.

The National Open University in Nigeria is intended to offer wider access to university education for a larger audience than could any conventional university, with or without part-time programs. The multimedia system of delivery makes it possible for Open University programs to reach

people in both urban and rural areas, the employed and unemployed, and male and female enrollees from different parts of a country. According to Hussain (2002), for instance, more than 75% of the students at the Allama Iqbal Open University of Pakistan are employed people who are given opportunities to take courses relevant to their jobs and thus improve their skills; 50% of those enrolled are females who can take their courses at home. Furthermore, the university offers access to both rural and urban students, as well as Pakistanis in Gulf States.

The National Open University in Nigeria is not really a new idea but the resuscitation of an earlier program initiated by the federal government during the administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. His government sponsored a bill before the National Assembly intended to give legal backing to the existence Open University of Nigeria, a bill that was passed as the National Assembly Act of 1982.

The university had commenced with rigorous planning which led to the appointment of Afolabi Ojo as the first Vice-Chancellor, the appointment of needed staff, and the development of infrastructure: curriculum and instructional materials. It was short-lived, however, since the military administration that toppled the second republic suspended the Open University program, and its facilities were taken over by the present University of Abuja, which was given the mandate to establish a Centre for Distance Learning.

The Open University is expected to operate open learning, which, as Champion (1989: 202) states, “enables individuals to learn what they wish, in their own time, in a place of their choice at a pace that suits them.” It is expected to adopt and utilize multimedia techniques in learning involving books, radio and television programs, audio and video cassettes, and the latest developments in information and communication technology (ICT).

The Open University in Nigeria operates in the country’s six political zones. This is in contrast to the satellite campuses, which operated only in major cities—such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Abuja—for commercial reasons; no such facility was located in the home states. The presence of open universities in Nigeria will ensure that many people in rural and urban centers will have greater access to university education.

In an effort to satisfy the desire of many Nigerians for university education through the Open University, the federal government has initiated various programs to ensure satisfactory implementation of the university. For example, the importance of efficient supply of electricity to the successful functioning of the Open University has been recognized. Consequently, the federal government set up a special task force with a target date for the management of the National Electric Power Authority to ensure efficient and regular supply of electricity nationwide. Efforts are therefore being made to improve the production and distribution of electricity in the country.

The Open University relies heavily on radio and television broadcasts. The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) have therefore been directed to improve their network services to every part of the country. In response to this, the NTA has been installing new transmitters in different states of the federation. Similarly, the FRCN is developing and expanding its coverage to ensure the availability, efficiency, and effectiveness of its program broadcasting. Radio and television media will be used to deliver lectures to Open University students.

The postal system has not been left out of the preparation for the effective launch of the Open University. Indeed, the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) has been directed to improve its mail delivery nationwide. This will ensure that materials sent by mail between the university and its students, and vice versa, are not delayed unduly. Information and communication projects (e.g., Internet facilities) are being developed by the federal government and its agencies to facilitate interaction between the Open University and students reading materials.

3. SUGGESTIONS

For the Open University to achieve its objectives of providing quality university education to the teeming population that is hungry for it, it is necessary that the institution take networking very seriously. A great deal is to be learned or borrowed from other similar or related agencies/institutions within the country and beyond. In this era of globalization, which has been defined by G.G. Johnston (cited in Oduaran, 2001: 271) “as the increasing interdependence and interconnectedness of people of the world in their request to improve general conditions of life for all human beings,” networking is indispensable. For successful implementation of the Open University in Nigeria, the institution must network with both local and foreign agencies, as well as with the NUC, a government agency responsible for the supervision and control of Nigerian universities. Much can be learned from the experience of the NUC. The Open University also can benefit from the virtual (digital) library project the NUC is developing to widen access to library users and thereby to improve teaching and research in Nigerian universities. Students of open universities, like their counterparts in conventional universities, can also benefit from this virtual library project. Similarly, the Open University should network with universities running open and distance learning programs, such as those at the University of Lagos, the University of Ibadan, and the University of Abuja.

The management of the National Open University of Nigeria should also network with open universities elsewhere, including the Open University of Britain, Allama Iqbal Open University of Pakistan, Canadian Open Learning Agency, Indian National Open Education Commission, the International Extension College of United Kingdom, and related institutions in China, France, the United States, and other parts of the world. The networking and cooperation should involve staff development through staff exchange, production of course materials, operational techniques, and general experience-sharing.

For effective management, it is necessary to establish a National Open and Distance Education Commission. It would serve functions similar to those provided, for instance, by the NUC and Indian National Open Education Commission. Once established, the commission would have responsibility for the maintenance of standards through accreditation of courses, as well as networking with relevant governmental and nongovernmental organizations within and outside Nigeria. It should maintain links with employers who are the end-users of products of the education industry—particularly the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association, the National Manpower Board, and staff development institutions such as the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria and the Centre for Management Development. The commission should assist the Open University in the development and training of needed staff and the development of infra-structural materials.

The relevance of adequate funding to educational programs has to be fully appreciated. Funds provide the essential purchasing power with which education acquires its human and physical inputs. Without sufficient funds, education can be helpless; but where it is adequately provided, the problems of education become more manageable even though they do not disappear.

The Open University program is new and therefore requires a huge investment of capital and will involve recurrent costs. The prevailing situation of underfunding, which plagues Nigeria's educational system as it does most other developing countries, should be avoided if the Open University program is to achieve the objectives for which it has been established.

There must be adequate promotion and publicizing of the Open University program so as to develop a positive situation in which graduates from part-time programs and from state-owned and private universities will no longer be looked upon as inferior to graduates from federal, and particularly first-generation, universities. The existing bias against these alternative modes of university education should not be allowed to bear negatively on graduates of the Open University in terms of employment and task performance. This calls for adequate and effective mobilization before the Open University program commences and throughout its lifetime.

4. CONCLUSION

For many Nigerians, access to university education is restricted due to a limited number of spaces, which itself is the result of a lack of infrastructure: paucity of facilities and staff in the conventional and specialized universities. In the spirit of equity and equality and to meet the need for quality human resource development, alternative ways of giving access to more Nigerians who are hungry for university education can be achieved through the Open University program. It is therefore imperative that the proposed Open University be given proper attention in terms of planning and implementation so that the desired benefits can be achieved.

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MATURE AGE ENTRY AND WIDENING ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: A SOUTHERN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Stanley Mpopfu

1. INTRODUCTION

Mature age entry schemes are essentially second chance schemes designed to allow disadvantaged adults who could not complete formal education access into higher education institutions, provided they have shown the capability of studying at this level. The large numbers of adults who may be capable, but lack the necessary formal entry qualifications, justify the existence of such schemes in several countries of the South (Third World). Several reasons account for such large numbers of adults who are motivated and can benefit from higher education, but still lack the necessary entry requirements. First and foremost is the problem of inadequate provision of school places. This was notably so before independence in many African countries. Zambia and Zimbabwe are good examples. The statistics relating to educational achievement on the eve of Zambia's independence in 1964 revealed an appalling situation. In a population of 3.5 million, there were approximately 1,000 persons who were holders of secondary school certificates and about 100 graduates altogether (Lowe, 1970). The illiteracy rate was (also higher than in most newly independent countries) estimated at being about 60% of the total population (Office of Statistics, 1970). In addition, in the rural areas, 3 out of 7 men and 17 out of 20 women had never attended school (Office of Statistics, 1970). The situation was equally bad for Zimbabwe. According to the 1969 census of Rhodesia (as Zimbabwe was called then) (Central Statistics Office, 1969), 72% of the African adult population had no formal education or had less than 3 years of formal education. The 1982 census (2 years after independence) also revealed that out of a total adult population of 4 million, 63% (2.5 million) were either illiterate or semiliterate (Central Statistics Office, 1982). This sad state of affairs was directly attributed to the paucity of provision during the colonial era.

Despite massive increases in educational provision after the attainment of independence, in these countries there remains a sizeable number of the adult population who have not had an opportunity to complete the formal entry qualification. For example, Zimbabwe has a 70%+ progression rate from Grade 7 to Form 1 (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, Zimbabwe, 2000). Clearly, about a third of the children who complete primary school do not proceed to secondary school. Also, the dropout rate between Form 1 and the school certificate has remained high. According to figures cited for the period 1984–1992 (Mpofu and Mbizwo, 1996), the average dropout rate between Form 1 and the school certificate is 24.5%. Thus, of the 500,000+ pupils that enroll for Form 1 annually, about 125,000 do not make it to “Ordinary” level (4 years later). The situation is worse for other countries in the region. For example, an analysis of figures obtained from the Ministry of Education, Zambia, for the period 1972–1996 (Ministry of Education, Zambia, 1972–1996), reveals that less than one-fifth of those who sit for Grade 7 examinations make it to secondary schools in that country, and less than one-third of those who make it to Form 1 go to “Ordinary” level. In Botswana, just over 50% of those who sit for Junior Certificate examinations proceed to Senior Secondary School (Ministry of Education, Botswana, 1999).

Other notable reasons for this state of affairs are poor health, and the attitudes of parents, particularly towards the education of girls.

These factors, among others, account for the presence of many persons among the adult population who have the ability, as demonstrated by performance in short courses and experience in their work situation, but who lack the formal entry requirements for admission to university. Mature age entry schemes provide an opportunity for such disadvantaged persons to enter university.

However, there is little consensus about the value or efficacy of such schemes. Some argue about what category of disadvantaged adults should benefit from such a scheme. For instance, during the 1980–1981 academic year, there was a general feeling among some staff of the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Zambia that the scheme had served its usefulness since the needs of those capable persons who had been denied the opportunities before independence would have long been met. They were of the opinion that it should not be used for failures of the school system (University of Zambia, 1982). Today many people at the University of Zambia share this view. Hence, the scheme was discontinued in 1996 (Siaciwena, 1996).

Another notable disagreement pertains to the programs that should benefit from such a scheme. Some insist that the scheme should be limited to the humanities, while others contend that it should be open to all fields of study. The University of Zimbabwe, for example, subscribes to the former

view. The university calendar categorically states that admission through the scheme will only be for programs in the faculties of arts, commerce, law, social sciences, and education (University of Zimbabwe, 2002).

Underlying the wide differences in policy and practice appears to be a fundamental problem concerning the legitimacy of such schemes. In this chapter we explore these variations in policies and practices at five universities in Southern Africa, namely the Universities of Botswana, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and the National University of Lesotho (NUL). This chapter is essentially a report on a study we conducted at the five institutions.

2. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

2.1 Meaning of “mature age entry”

The concept of “mature age entry” has often been used interchangeably with the concept of “mature student.” This is not surprising since the clientele of mature age entry schemes are mature students. Also, there is confusion because the general definition of “mature student” includes the basic elements crucial to the definition of “mature age entry.” To sort out this issue, an analysis of the concept of “mature student” and how it relates to the concept of “mature age entry” is needed.

The definition of “mature student” is not consistent across the world. Indeed, in some countries, such as Italy and most developing countries, the concept does not exist at all. Where the concept has been adopted, it is defined in terms of age, and/or in terms of the gap between leaving school and entering higher education. In terms of age, the definition varies from country to country, and sometimes from institution to institution. In the United Kingdom, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) has adopted 21 years and over as the qualification for the age of maturity. In Denmark, anyone who is at least 20–21 years (depending on the context) is considered a mature student (Davies, 1995).

In Belgium and France, the cutoff point is 23 years, while in Australia the most common cutoff point is 25 years, although this varies between institutions (Davies, 1995). Age alone does not justify the relevance of the concept of “mature student” in university education. Also, age does not in any way distinguish between the concept of “mature student” and that of “mature age entry.” Hence, there is also a need to examine the issue of “maturity” in terms of the time between leaving school and entering the university.

With respect to the gap between leaving school and entering the university, three types of “mature student” can be discerned. First, there are

the “deferrers,” who are similar in many respects to the traditional student who comes directly from school, except that they have taken either extra time to obtain the usual entry qualification or time out for a number of reasons before entering university. Second, there are the “returnees,” who reenter the university to upgrade or update their qualifications. Third, there are the “second chancers,” who, due to some form of disadvantage, do not have the traditional university entry qualification (Davies, 1995).

The latter type of “mature student” is what mature age entry is all about. Mature age entry is a second chance scheme for those people who, for one reason or another, could not obtain the necessary formal qualification for university entry. However, before these people are finally admitted for university study, they must have a proven record of capability for this level of study, as demonstrated by their performance in extramural courses and at work. Also, they must have completed their formal school at least 2 years back and be no younger than a certain age (ranges from 20 to 25 years). In addition, they may be required to pass a special entry examination and/or an interview.

2.2 Practices

Perhaps the most notable mature age entry scheme in the world is the Open University in the United Kingdom, which, since its inception in 1969, has had no entry qualifications for undergraduate programs (Hayes et al., 1997). Courses are designed in such a way that they can be studied by adults with little prior knowledge. In 1991, more than 18,000 new undergraduate students joined more than 80,000 continuing undergraduates at the Open University. The average age of the Open University student body is 34, the majority being in the 25–45 age group, and more than 75% remain in employment throughout their studies (Davies, 1995). The other notable mature age entry scheme in the United Kingdom consists of “access” courses, which provide older students (21 and above) who lack the necessary university entry qualifications with the subject specific knowledge and general study skills required for successful university study. In 1993, “access” course schemes, which have been adopted by many universities, contributed 13,000 students to universities throughout the United Kingdom (Davies, 1995).

In the Netherlands, the most notable scheme is the *hogescholen*, which allows a student who does not possess the standard university qualification but does possess a diploma in a vocational field to pursue a university degree, preferably in a related subject. In 1991, this scheme accounted for 20.4% (8,003) of all university entrants (39,235). The scheme is limited to those who are 21 years and older (Spackman and Owen, 1995).

Another significant mature age entry scheme in Europe is the Higher Preparatory Examination (HF) in Denmark, which is essentially a university entrance examination for which anyone who is above 18 is eligible. In 1992, the Higher Preparation Examination Scheme accounted for 16% (6,372) of the total Danish University intake (39,995) (Davies, 1995).

Other notable European schemes are: in Spain, the “access tests” (university entry examinations for people who are 25 and above), which accounted for 11% (2,835) of the total undergraduate intake (25,773) of the National University of Distance Education (UNED) for the 1988–1989 academic year (Osborne, 1995); in Germany, the *Abitur* (the standard higher education entrance qualification), which contributed 2.4% (5,124) to the total German university intake (213,500) of 1990 (Davies and Reisinger, 1995); in Austria, the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* (an alternative university entry examination for those 20 years old and above who do not possess the “*Matura*”), which accounted for 2.2% (482) of all university entrants (21,423) in 1988–1989 (Benn, 1995); and in France, the Accreditation for Prior Learning and the Special Entry Examination, which brought in 0.7% (4,283) and 0.9% (3,554) new entrants in 1990–1991 and 1991–1992, respectively (Davies, 1995).

Outside Europe, the most renowned mature age entry schemes are found in Australia. They come in two major forms, namely preparatory programs and recognition of prior learning (Postle, 1995). The most common preparatory programs include the Access and Equity program at the University of Southern Queensland and the Open Foundation Course at the University of Newcastle. The objective of these programs is to provide disadvantaged groups with an alternative entry route to university education. In essence, these programs equip students lacking formal entry qualifications with the necessary prerequisites for entry into the university, and also teach them skills that are associated with successful university study. Recognition of prior learning has become a significant feature of “new” universities. It often involves formal award courses, particularly the determination of their equivalence to formal academic qualifications. In addition, these universities recognize experiential or work-based learning. This scheme clearly excludes marginalized adult students, most of whom have no formal qualification of any kind and often do not hold a formal job.

In Southern Africa, the University of Zambia is undoubtedly the most experienced in the provision of mature age entry. In accordance with the observation of the Lockwood Commission (1963) that “a university will not serve its social purpose if it sets its standards of admission so high that it is concerned only with a tiny minority of extremely able students and does nothing for the larger numbers of less spectacular ability who will not realize their full potential in service unless they have the advantage of a university education” (p. 3), the University of Zambia adopted the Mature Age

Entry Scheme in 1966. The scheme was initially aimed at the “large numbers of people of ability who were born too early to have benefited from university education” (Siaciwena, 1996: 2), which had started in 1957 with the inauguration of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The requirements originally adopted by the University Senate in 1967 remained in force until 1996, when the scheme was abolished, following recommendations of the Siaciwena Report (1996).

The mature age entry scheme established by the University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland (UBLS) in 1972 was initially “designed to offer those who are 25 years of age or over and who have not, for whatever reason, been able to gain university entry qualifications at Secondary/High School level, a chance to study in the university on equal terms with other students” (UBLS, 1971: 1). The UBLS scheme has been adopted with very few changes by the successors of that institution, namely the NUL and the University of Botswana and Swaziland (UBS), and, subsequently, by the successors of the latter, the Universities of Botswana (UB) and Swaziland (UNISWA). In 1985, NUL suspended its mature age entry scheme, but the other two (those of UB and UNISWA) are still in operation.

The youngest scheme in the universities in question, the mature age entry scheme offered by the University of Zimbabwe since 1981, is essentially a second chance university entry scheme for those people who had little opportunity to pursue higher education when they were younger (University of Zimbabwe, 1997). However, in principle, this facility is open only to those whose fields of activity are in the humanities.

The introduction and administration of mature age entry schemes has not been without controversy. In countries with selective systems, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, there has been a great deal of tension between the recruitment of mature age entry students and the recruitment of school leavers. Traditionally, universities derive their reputation from excellence in the education of the young school leaver. As such, an institutional profile with a high proportion of mature age entrants in undergraduate programs is often associated with lower status. Hence, many universities are known to limit the number of mature age entrants to a small percentage per program (Hasley, 1992).

Also, many faculties remain unconvinced that successful completion of preparatory programs can be equated with the conventional entrance qualification. Hence, as Davies (1995) observes, most mature age entrants are found in the faculties of arts, education, general studies, social studies, and medicine, and very few, if any, are in science, engineering, and technology.

While many attempts have been made to examine the policies and practices of mature age entry schemes in Europe and Australia (Hasley, 1992; Davies, 1995; Postle, 1995; Hayes et al., 1997), no attempt seems to have

been made to do the same in Africa, let alone in the Southern African region. Accordingly, the study at issue here sought to analyze the policies, practices, and performances of mature age entry schemes in five countries in Southern Africa. Their comparative analysis should be of use to the progressive educationists, planners, policy-makers, and administrators of tertiary education in their quest for ways and means of improving the schemes. It should also be of use to those universities that do not have such schemes in their anticipated efforts to develop such schemes.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population

The study was limited to the Universities of Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, and the NUL. The existence of mature age entry schemes in the first three universities was the main criteria for selecting them. The last two, which have terminated the schemes, were included because they were the pioneers of the scheme in the region.

Another criterion was the fact that they are all English-speaking institutions that grew out of the British tradition, and, as such, have much in common. While the Universities of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland (BOLESWA) developed under similar circumstances, this was not exactly the case with the Universities of Zambia and Zimbabwe. This provided an excellent opportunity for comparative analyses.

3.2 Sources of data

To establish the policies and practices of these schemes and thus to determine their development aspects and current feelings towards them, the study sought information from relevant documents, such as reports, brochures, students records, and council, senate, faculty, and departmental minutes concerned with the issue. In addition, information was sought from registrars, assistant registrars responsible for admissions, deans of faculties, and heads of departments, irrespective of whether their faculties and their departments, respectively, were admitting students through this scheme. Since this was a fairly small group, the population was taken as given.

With regard to performances of mature age entry students, students' records and examination results were examined. In addition, information was sought from assistant registrars responsible for examinations and those heads whose departments had had experience with such schemes. Again,

since they were fairly manageable groups, the assistant registrars and heads of departments were taken as given.

3.3 Instrumentation

In order to obtain information not easily obtainable from documents while at the same time buttressing the information gleaned from the documents, a questionnaire was developed for the “administrators” of the scheme. The questionnaire was a survey with four sections concerning more than 100 items. The first section included 11 sociodemographic variables considered relevant for the analysis of the rest of the data. These variables included institution, faculty, department, discipline, highest academic qualification, and academic rank. The respondent’s perception of the mature age entry scheme formed the subject of the second section. The respondent’s perception of the issue at hand was considered important because it formed the basis of that respondent’s answers to the rest of the survey.

Sections three and four constituted the heart of the study. Section three addressed policies, practices, and performances of existing mature age entry schemes, while section four sought information on the policies, practices, and performances of past schemes, where applicable. The questionnaire was piloted on the Botswana section of the research population. It was found to be enjoyable, thought-provoking, and relevant to the study at hand.

3.4 Data collection procedures

At each institution, data were collected in two ways. First, a library search was conducted on the aforementioned reports, brochures, and council, senate, faculty, and departmental minutes on the issue at hand. The library search turned up a total of 57 relevant documents: 13 from Botswana; 8 from Lesotho; 12 from Swaziland; 14 from Zimbabwe; and 10 from Zambia. Second, 248 administrators (registrars, assistant registrars, deans, and heads of departments) received the questionnaire.

At the University of Botswana, the questionnaire was sent to the 48 administrators, half of which completed and returned it. In Lesotho, 13 out of the 52 administrators returned the questionnaire, giving a 25% return rate. In Swaziland, 10 out of 25 returned the questionnaire. Of the 69 administrators of the scheme at the University of Zimbabwe, 22 (31.9%) returned the questionnaire. Finally, at the University of Zambia, a 35.2% response (19 out of 54) rate was attained. Altogether, 88 people (32.3%) responded to the survey. The low response did not constitute a problem for the simple reason that the population was taken as given. As such, the responses were adequately representative of the population at hand.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The first step in data analysis was to compile a demographic profile of the respondents. Then the few open-ended questions were subjected to a content analysis and inductively coded. The third and final step of data analysis consisted of subjecting all the data to simple statistical techniques, such as frequency counts and percentages.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Description of respondents

The respondents consisted of 12 deans, 4 directors of institutes, 62 heads of departments, 2 registrars, 2 deputy registrars, 3 senior assistant registrars, and 3 assistant registrars. The majority (73) were male. Out of this 78 were Black, 9 were White, and 1 Oriental. They ranged in age from 39 to 61. With respect to level of education, 51 had doctorates, 31 had master's degrees, and the remaining 6 had bachelor's degrees. Among the 78 academics, there were 36 lecturers, 22 senior lecturers, 8 associate professors, and 12 professors. The distribution by faculty was as follows: education, 24; engineering and technology, 4; humanities and/or arts, 11; science, 10; social sciences, 8; law, 1; commerce, 2; medicine, 5; veterinary science, 3; and agriculture, 10. Finally, 33 heads were in departments that had or had had mature age entry schemes.

5.2 Objectives of each scheme

The objectives of mature age entry schemes are the same across the five institutions, namely to provide a second chance opportunity for university education for those people who have the ability, as demonstrated by performance in short courses, and experience in their work situation, but who lack the formal entry requirements for admission to university. Each scheme is essentially an alternative entry route for university education. In a sense, it constitutes an exception from the standard qualifications specified under the general entrance requirements. It is designed to enable some potential graduates, who would otherwise be excluded by the standard entrance requirements, to enter the university and study on equal terms with others.

In principle, each scheme is complementary to existing entrance qualifications, in that it is one of the accepted alternative qualifications for admission to some of the study programs offered at the university. Technically, in all the institutions but the University of Zimbabwe, the scheme is (or was, in the cases of Lesotho and Zambia) applicable to all

programs across the university. At the University of Zimbabwe, admission through the scheme is limited to programs in the faculties of arts, commerce, law, social sciences, and education.

All the schemes, except for that of the University of Zambia, are aimed at three levels of study: certificate, diploma, and bachelor's degree levels. At the University of Zambia, the scheme was exclusively applicable to bachelor's degree programs.

Essentially, the objectives of the schemes at hand are consistent with the concept of "second chancers," which is what mature age entry is all about.

5.3 Administrators' commitment to the scheme

The "administrators" of the scheme were asked to indicate whether or not the scheme should continue. In Botswana, only 3 of the 24 administrators said the scheme should be discontinued. Of the three, one was a director of an institute, which did not have the scheme, one was head of a department, which did not have the scheme, and, surprisingly, the third headed a department, which had the scheme. At the NUL, only 1 of the 13 administrators indicated that they would like the scheme to remain suspended. Surprisingly, this respondent headed a department that had such a scheme. In Swaziland, all the 10 administrators said they would like the scheme to continue in existence. Of the 19 administrators at the University of Zambia, 6 said they would like to see the scheme remain closed. Among the six, four were heads of departments whose departments had such a scheme. The other two were a head whose department did not have such a scheme and a member of the registry. Finally, at the University of Zimbabwe all administrators but one head whose department had such a scheme said they would like the scheme to continue.

Altogether, 77 out of 88 "administrators" would like mature age entry schemes to continue. When asked why they would like these schemes to continue, all of them seemed to say that they are a symbol of open access, which is otherwise lacking in universities. On the other hand, 11 administrators would like to see mature age entry schemes discontinued. When asked to explain their answers, six said that "the scheme had served its usefulness," while the rest said "the scheme was now being used to accommodate failures of the school system." Of particular interest, is the fact that seven of those who indicated that they would like to see the scheme terminated had or had had such schemes in their departments.

5.4 The target group of each scheme

By "target group" is meant the general category of people who have benefited from the scheme over the years. As outlined earlier in the objectives

of each scheme, the University of Zimbabwe categorically states that admission through the scheme shall be restricted to programs that are offered by the faculties of arts, commerce, law, social sciences, and education. And, indeed, over the years these faculties have admitted some students through the scheme.

Clearly, both in principle and in practice, the University of Zimbabwe discriminates against those people who have done extramural studies that are considered to lie outside the programs that are offered by the five faculties. Also, the university clearly discriminates against people whose work experience lies outside the fields that are traditionally associated with the faculties at hand.

When asked to choose a possible explanation for discriminating against natural scientists, from a list of several explanations, all the 22 respondents cited the following: "lack of extramural programmes in the natural sciences means that very few individuals, if any, can improve themselves in this field outside the formal school system."

While, as outlined earlier, the other institutions do not, in principle, discriminate against any sectors of the education community, in practice they do. The University of Botswana has, to date, admitted mature age entrants only into the faculties of education, humanities, and social sciences. Similarly, the NUL admitted the majority of mature age entrants into the faculties of education, humanities, and social sciences, and very few into the faculty of science. From 1991 to 1998, the University of Swaziland admitted mature age entrants into the following faculties: agriculture, 4; commerce, 7; education, 34; humanities, 4; science, 4; and social sciences, 37 (University of Swaziland, 1996). And, finally, in its 30-year life span, the University of Zambia admitted the majority of its mature age entrants through the schools of education, humanities, and social sciences, and relatively few through the schools of agricultural sciences, medicine, and natural sciences.

Evidently, while these four institutions do not discriminate against certain faculties, they hardly use the mature age entry scheme to admit students into the hard sciences. When asked to choose a possible explanation for this state of affairs, all the 66 respondents from these institutions concurred with their Zimbabwean counterparts that a lack of extramural programs in the natural sciences deny the "natural scientists" opportunities to earn alternative university entry qualifications. Implied here is that the problem is not that universities discriminate against natural scientists, but rather that there are very few natural scientists who are eligible for entry through the scheme. Whatever the reason for this state of affairs, this finding is consistent with Davies's (1995) observation that mature age entrants are found mostly in the faculties of arts, education, general studies, and social studies, and very few, if any, in science, engineering, and technology.

5.5 Procedures and criteria for selection

In examining recruitment and selection procedures, the study looked at the following variables: citizenship, level of academic achievement, proficiency in English, age, gap between leaving school and entering the university, extramural courses and work experience, number of attempts and past failures at the university, and entrance tests and examinations, interviews, and references. However, before examining how each scheme fared on each variable, it is necessary to look at the general admission policy of each institution.

In Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, the normal requirements for entrance into 4-year bachelor's degree programs is an unspecified aggregate of six passes in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate. The aggregate of the qualifying subjects (which must include English for all degree programs in Lesotho and Swaziland, and some degree programs in Botswana) is determined from year to year, depending on the pass rate for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate. In addition, a student who obtains a pass in a diploma program may be allowed to enter year 1 of a bachelor's degree program. Finally, a student who obtains a credit in a 2-year diploma may enter year 2 of a related bachelor's degree program, while a student who obtains a credit in a 3-year diploma may proceed to year 3 of a related bachelor's degree program. With respect to diploma and certificate programs, entrance requirements are normally a minimum of a Third Division in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate, or its equivalent, and a minimum of a Junior Certificate, respectively.

The general entrance requirements at the University of Zambia are in large part similar to those of the BOLESWA institutions. According to the University of Zambia Calendar for the period 1994–1996 (when the scheme was still in place) and the 2000–2004 calendar, normal entrance requirements for the 4-year bachelor's degree programs are five credits (including English language) in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or five passes (including English language) in the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) (University of Zambia, 1994, 2000). Also, as is generally the case in the BOLESWA institutions, a person holding a 2-year diploma from the university or of an institution awarding the diploma in associate relationship with the university is regarded as having satisfied the general entrance requirements. Regarding diploma and certificate programs, the University of Zambia, unlike the BOLESWA institutions, lacks a clearly defined out-entry policy, since the calendar is silent on the issue.

The University of Zimbabwe's normal entry policy significantly differs from that of the other four institutions. For normal entry into the 3-year bachelor's degree program, a candidate must have either: (a) five passes in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or General Certificate of

Education, of which at least two must have been at Advanced Level, or (b) four passes in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or General Certificate of Education, of which at least three must have been taken at Advanced Level. In addition, candidates must have passed English language at Ordinary Level. And for normal entry into undergraduate certificate and diploma programs, a student must have five passes (including English language) at the Ordinary Level of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or General Certificate of Education. In addition, applicants for undergraduate diploma programs must have an appropriate post Ordinary Level qualification and/or a minimum of 3 years of relevant experience.

In examining each scheme vis-à-vis each variable, it must be borne in mind that the purpose of mature age entry schemes is to provide for entry into universities by way of nonconventional qualifications.

5.6 Citizenship

The issue of citizenship is the fundamental condition for consideration in any mature age entry scheme. The University of Zambia is the only institution, which clearly spelled out that eligibility for consideration under the scheme was restricted to Zambian citizens who at that time resided in Zambia. While the other institutions are silent on this issue, in practice eligibility for entrance through the scheme is (was, in the case of Lesotho) limited to citizens who are (were, in the case of Lesotho) residents. In fact, from the categorization of students in the General Entrance Regulations of each institution it can be inferred that noncitizens will only be considered for normal entry. The University of Zimbabwe is very explicit on this issue. It is clearly stipulated in the calendar (2002) that foreign students may be offered “admission only if they fulfill the entry requirements with very high academic qualifications and provided that their admission will not deny a place to an eligible Zimbabwean applicant.”

5.7 Level of academic achievement

The Universities of Botswana and Zimbabwe are quite explicit on the minimum academic requirements for entrance through the scheme. A minimum of a Junior Certificate is required for entrance into certificate, diploma, and bachelor’s degree programs at the University of Botswana, while at the University of Zimbabwe a minimum of three Ordinary Level subjects including English (or six Grade 11 subjects at Grade 6 or better including English) and at least five Ordinary Level subjects including English (or six Grade 11 subjects at Grade 6 or better including English) is required for certificate/diploma and bachelor’s degree programs, respectively.

While the other three institutions do not specify an academic cutoff point, in practice they have cutoff points below which they will not consider anyone. For the University of Swaziland and the NUL, the cutoff point for the certificate, diploma, and bachelor's degree programs is (was, in the case of Lesotho) the Junior Certificate, while for the University of Zambia the cutoff point for bachelor's degree programs (the only level to which the scheme was applicable) was the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or the General Certificate of Education. Thus, the BOLESWA countries admit people with Junior Certificate, while Zambia and Zimbabwe limit entrance through the scheme to holders of the Cambridge School Certificate (Ordinary Level). Two observations can be made in here. First, people who are eligible through the scheme for bachelor's degree programs in the BOLESWA countries would not be admitted through the scheme to the certificate and diploma programs at the University of Zimbabwe. Second, those who qualify to enter bachelor's degree programs through the scheme in Zambia and Zimbabwe would qualify for normal entry in Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland.

A comparison of normal entry requirements and the general level of academic education for mature age entry students (as reflected in the student records), reveals two situations. On one hand, there are institutions where there is no difference between the academic requirements for normal entry and those for mature age entry. One such institution is the University of Zambia. However, in practice, normal entry is much higher than what is reflected in the calendar. The demand for university education has inflated the normal entry requirements and this in turn has raised academic requirements for mature age entry. By not raising the academic requirements accordingly, the university authorities are clearly refusing to succumb to the market forces of education. Instead, they have opted to suspend the mature age entry scheme, which would be appropriate if all those who are eligible for normal entry could enter the university. A similar situation existed in Lesotho immediately before the suspension of the scheme. More and more people (70% of the 1981–1982 intake) needed Cambridge School Certificates (Ordinary Level) to enroll through the scheme, thus closing the gap between mature age entry and normal entry. Instead of raising the academic qualifications accordingly, the authorities suspended the mature age entry scheme. On the other hand, in Botswana, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe, the stipulated minimum academic qualifications tally with the actual students' qualifications as reflected in students' records.

5.8 Proficiency in English

The language of instruction in all the five institutions is English, hence the relevance of proficiency in English as a criterion for selection through the mature age entry scheme. However, only the Universities of Zambia and Zimbabwe stipulate that applicants for entry through the scheme not only

must demonstrate proficiency in English but they must also satisfy the university that they have an adequate command of English. The latter requirement involves passing a test in English proficiency.

The BOLESWA universities, on the other hand, are silent on the issue of proficiency in English. It must be pointed out, however, that in practice the NUL had incorporated an English component into the entrance examination, which all applicants had to pass. Applicants who failed the English component of the entrance examination were allowed to proceed only if they were found to have passed English at an examining body recognized by the university, such as the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate and Business Studies (National University of Lesotho, 1997: 1).

It must also be pointed out that whereas in the BOLESWA institutions proficiency in English is not a prerequisite for admission, these institutions make up for this deficiency by requiring that all first-year students who do not have a minimum of an E grade in English at the Advanced Level enroll for classes in English and/or academic communication skills. The Universities of Zambia and Zimbabwe do not have such a requirement, but instead have made proficiency in English a condition for admission through the scheme.

5.9 Age

By its very nature, the concept of mature age entry implies “maturity” in many respects, including age; hence, age is a relevant criterion for selection through the scheme. In this respect, all but the University of Zimbabwe restrict admission to people who are at least 25 years of age. At the University of Zimbabwe, the age restriction differs per level of study. For the bachelor’s degree programs, admission is restricted to 30-year-olds and above and for certificate and diploma programs, admission is limited to males aged 30 years and above and females aged 25 years and above. The two-tier system for certificate and diploma programs was adopted in the early 1990s as part of an affirmative action strategy to increase the number of female students at the university.

5.10 Gap between leaving school and entering university

The greater the gap between formal school and university, the more the educational attainments and the longer the relevant work experience, hence the relevance of this variable in the selection criteria. All the five institutions require that applicants must have completed their full-time school at least 5 years before the beginning of the academic year for which admission is

sought. However, while others insist upon this requirement, for 29 years of its 30 year existence (since November 1967), the University of Zambia did not insist upon this requirement (Siaciwena, 1996). In practice, though, it seems that the university did not need to bother about this issue, since the gap for the mature age entry students that were still in the system in the 1997–1998 academic year ranged from 10 to 27 years. Altogether, the gap for mature age entry students enrolled in four universities (except the NUL) for the 1997–1998 academic year ranged from 8 to 27 years, clearly suggesting that a 5-year gap requirement is quite generous.

5.11 Extramural courses and work experience

Extramural attainments are an essential component of consideration for entry through mature age entry schemes; hence their relevance here. Without exception, all five institutions under consideration clearly stipulate that mature age entry applicants must have demonstrated potential suitability for university studies by virtue of their performance in extramural courses. From the attributes of mature age entry students as reflected in student records for the 1997–1998 academic year, it seems that extramural courses range from two-week workshops to 1-year certificate programs.

Closely related to extramural achievements is relevant work experience. All five institutions clearly stipulate that applicants through the scheme must have work experience the university considers relevant to the proposed field of study. While regulations for the mature age entry schemes do not specify the required length of experience, an analysis of regulations pertaining to programs that offer mature age entry reveals that the required length of relevant work experience generally ranges from 2 to 5 years.

5.12 Number of attempts at entering and past failures at the university

Regarding the number of attempts to enter the university through the scheme, the criteria vary considerably. The University of Zimbabwe is the strictest in this respect. The regulations clearly stipulate that “applicants who have previously attended mature age entry tests and/or interviews without success will not be considered for admission under this form of entry unless in the intervening period they have acquired relevant additional qualifications and/or experience” (University of Zimbabwe, 2002). The University of Botswana is a close second. The relevant regulations clearly stipulate that “no applicants who have already attempted the mature age entry test and examinations twice without success can be considered for admission under this form of entry unless in the intervening period they

have acquired relevant additional qualifications” (University of Botswana, 2003). The NUL and the University of Swaziland are a little more generous on this issue. They state that those who have already attempted the mature age entry examinations in two successive years without success cannot be considered for admission under the scheme unless in that 2-year period they have acquired additional qualifications. Technically, a candidate who fails more than twice can be considered for admission under the scheme without any additional qualifications, provided the unsuccessful attempts were not in consecutive years. The University of Zambia was silent on this issue. However, it seems that in practice the institution adopted a position similar to that of the University of Zimbabwe on this issue.

With regard to the admission of past failures at the university, only the University of Swaziland stipulates that applicants who have previously attended the university may not be readmitted to the university under these regulations to a program in which they have been unsuccessful during previous attendance, unless they produce evidence of further study the university deems satisfactory. The other four institutions are silent on the matter, and not without cause. This situation is clearly dealt with by their general regulations concerning “discontinuation” and “exclusion.” Like the others, the University of Swaziland has clear regulations that deal with this situation. In this respect, the regulations pertaining to mature age entry on this issue are superfluous.

5.13 Entrance tests and examinations, interviews, and references

Entrance tests and examinations generally constitute the last step in the process of considering people’s eligibility for entrance through the scheme. Without exception, all the five institutions require that candidates attend an aptitude test to determine their suitability for university study in general and for the proposed area of study in particular. For this reason, entrance tests normally take the form of a general paper, and a special paper in the candidates’ intended field of study.

Whereas in the other four institutions, the entrance test is written, at the University of Zimbabwe it may take the form of an interview. In fact, in the BOLESWA countries, the interview is an additional requirement over and above the written test. While, in Lesotho and Swaziland it is only those candidates who, in the opinion of the examiners, merit further consideration who are required to attend an interview, in Botswana, all candidates, irrespective of their performance on the written test, are required to attend an interview. In addition, the University of Botswana requires references from all applicants, while the NUL sought references from candidates who successfully passed the initial screening test.

From the above, it is evident that the BOLESWA countries have a laborious screening process as compared to Zambia and Zimbabwe. A laborious screening process involving interviews and references is necessary only in the absence of a properly validated and reliable entrance test.

5.14 Percentages of admissions through the scheme

Percentages of admissions through the scheme were sought at the institutional level. From available figures, Botswana has had an annual intake of between 150 and 200 mature age entry students over the past 5 years. This represents 15–20% of the annual intake. Enrollment projections suggest that the university has had 600–800 mature age entry students in any one academic year over the past 5 years. Compared to the University of Botswana, the National University of Lesotho (1996) had more or less similar percentages when it was in operation. Between 1976–1977 and 1978–1979 the annual intake of mature age entrants ranged from 17 to 55, while total first-year intake ranged from 225 to 294. The average annual intake for mature entrants was 6–19% during this period. From available figures, it can be estimated that, at the time of its suspension in 1985, the scheme brought in an annual intake of about 100 mature age entrants out of a total annual intake of 500. From the same figures, it appears that between 1980 and 1985 the NUL had about 400 mature age entry students out of a total student population of about 1,500.

Figures pertaining to the University of Swaziland show that it differs significantly from its former partners. While the total annual intake increased by 84% (from 901 in 1992–1993 to 1,659 in 1996–1997), the annual intake for mature age entry students declined by 53% in more or less the same period (from 15 in 1993–94 to 8 in 1996–1997). Over the past 5 years, the mature age entry annual intake for the University of Swaziland has never exceeded 1.6% of total annual intake. Clearly, the contribution of the mature age entry scheme to the student body at the University of Swaziland is negligible. At this rate, the scheme is all but nonexistent, and it is likely to die a natural death. It may not be needed. A glimpse into the number of applicants for entrance through the scheme during the aforementioned period indicates that they have ranged between 26 and 88, and that there has been a general decline in applicants since 1993–1994.

In Zambia enrollment figures for the period immediately preceding the abolition of the scheme in 1996 clearly show that the scheme contributed a negligible number of students (Table 25-1). As is evident from Table 25-1, mature age entry students did not exceed 6.4% of the enrollment between 1990–1991 and 1994–1995. According to the Siaciwena Report (1996), in real terms the number of applicants for entrance through the scheme had been declining. Perhaps the scheme had outlived its usefulness, which is why it was abolished.

Table 25-1. University of Zambia: enrollment, 1990–1991 to 1994–1995.

Academic year	Total enrollment	MAES enrollment	MAES intake as % of total intake
1990–1991	3,724	206	5.5
1991–1992	3,742	165	4.4
1992–1993	3,718	189	5.1
1993–1994	3,642	198	5.4
1994–1995	3,688	235	6.4

MAES, mature age entry scheme.

Source: Siaciwena (1996).

Finally, from available figures pertaining to the University of Zimbabwe, it is evident that the annual mature age intake rose from a little over 2% in 1981 to 10% in 1997. Enrollment projections suggest that the mature age entry intake has stabilized around 10% over the past 5 years. Ten percent represents about 350 of total annual intake. Thus, in any given academic year there should be about 1,000 mature age entry students from about 10,000 students. According to an unwritten rule, the annual intake of mature age entrants in any program cannot exceed 10% of the total intake of that program. Hence, the percentage of mature age entrants does not in this case represent demand for the scheme.

Two observations can be made in light of the above data. First, of the three existing schemes, those of the Universities of Botswana and Zimbabwe are the most viable in terms of enrollment. Second, of the two that are now defunct, the scheme used at the NUL was abandoned at a time when enrollment-wise it seemed most viable, while that of Zambia was abandoned at a time when its viability was on the decline.

5.15 Performance of mature age entry students

The performance of mature age entry students was sought both quantitatively and qualitatively. Also, in order to put the performance of mature age entry students into context, their pass rate was placed side by side with that of regular students. Quantitatively, in the period between 1993 and 1998, Botswana had average pass rates of 85% and 75%, for regular and mature age entry students, respectively (University of Botswana, 1998). In the past 5 years of its existence, the NUL had pass rates of 95% and 90% for regular and mature age entry students, respectively. At the University of Swaziland, the situation was slightly different from that of Botswana and Lesotho. During the period in question, the average pass rates were 85% and 95% for regular and mature age entry students, respectively. In Zambia, the respective pass rates were 87% and 82%, while in Zimbabwe they were 85% and 80%, for the period.

From the above findings, it is evident that in terms of performance there is no significant difference in either direction between regular and mature age entry students.

To determine the qualitative performance of mature age entry students as compared to that of regular students, those heads of departments whose departments had mature age entry students were asked to indicate whether they consider mature age entry students to be in the top 30%, top 50%, bottom 50%, or bottom 30%. Of the six relevant respondents in Botswana, one cited "top 30%," three cited "top 50%," and two cited "bottom 30%." In Lesotho, the two relevant heads of departments cited "top 50%." In Swaziland, all the six relevant heads of departments indicated that they considered the mature age entry students to be in the top 50%. At the University of Zambia, "top 50%" was cited by the majority (six), while the rest were cited by one each. Finally, at the University of Zimbabwe, exactly half (five) cited "top 50%," two each cited "bottom 50%" and "bottom 30%," and one cited "top 30%."

Altogether, 25 of the 33 heads who were competent to answer the question at hand considered mature age entry students to be among the top 50% of the students. Clearly, heads of departments find the performance of mature age entry students generally commendable. An interesting observation was that all the five respondents who considered mature age entry students to be among the bottom 30% in performance were in the natural sciences.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study findings show that the five schemes are similar in many respects. First, the objectives of the schemes are essentially the same across the five institutions under consideration, namely to provide a "second chance" opportunity for university education to those adults who lack the necessary entry requirements, provided they can demonstrate capability for this level of study. Second, in all five institutions studied the "administrators" are generally committed to the mature age entry scheme and would like to see this facility continue, or revived wherever it has been suspended. Third, in practice all the five schemes largely target people whose field of activities are in the humanities. And fourth, in all five schemes there is no marked difference in performance between regular and mature age entry students.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal some differences among the five schemes. With regard to procedures and criteria for selection, there are two major variations. First, the BOLESWA schemes admit people with Form 2 (Junior Certificate), while the Zambian and Zimbabwean schemes limit entrance through the scheme to holders of the Cambridge School Certificate (Ordinary Level). Second, whereas the Zambian and the Zimbabwean schemes clearly stipulate that applicants must be proficient in English, the BOLESWA schemes are silent on the issue. Finally, with regard to percentages of admissions through the scheme, there are marked differences that do not follow the above pattern. At the time of suspension, the Lesotho scheme had an annual average of about 20% admissions

through the scheme, while the Zambian scheme had an annual average of about 5% admissions through the scheme. And, while the Universities of Botswana and Zimbabwe reflect a mature age entry intake of 10–20% in their annual intake, the University of Swaziland brings in an insignificant portion (0.5–1.6%) of its annual intake through the scheme.

7. IMPLICATIONS

Despite a low return rate, this study has provided useful insights into the operations of five mature age entry schemes in the region. Notwithstanding the obvious need for a more comprehensive study covering many more universities in the region, the findings of this study have several implications for research and practice.

7.1 Implications for research

Several questions that point to the need for further research on this issue have emerged. First, there is a need to establish why people who have had experience with mature age entry schemes feature very prominently among those who would like to see such schemes eliminated. Second, there is need to determine exactly why the scheme has not worked well in the natural sciences. Is it due to lack of extramural programs in the natural sciences, as suggested by the respondents in this study? Or is it due to that mature age entry schemes are generally considered to be unsuitable for the natural sciences? If the latter, why and how? All these are questions to which research ought to address itself.

7.2 Implications for practice

Notwithstanding the need for further research, the findings of the study present useful information for universities.

- (i) There is enough commitment among administrators and university senators (people who make and implement academic decisions) to mature age entry schemes. This suggests that they subscribe to the ideals of the scheme and thus would be willing to implement such a scheme if one is not already in effect.
- (ii) There is evidence—slight though it is—that natural scientists can also benefit from such a scheme. Therefore, in the absence of counterevidence, the scheme should be available to those natural scientists that are eligible for it.
- (iii) Regarding procedures and criteria for selection, three issues have been singled out for possible review. First, the issue of academic qualifications needs to be monitored very closely and reviewed accordingly.

A high primary/secondary school progression rate, such as that existing in Zimbabwe (70%+), could inflate qualifications, thereby forcing an upward trend in entry qualifications. Failure to review qualifications could lead not only to an inundation of universities but also could create false hopes among the many aspirants to university education. Abandoning the scheme due to high qualifications in all areas is an appropriate decision only if all those who qualify for normal entry can enter the university. Second, the screening process for the BOLESWA countries seems rather long and demanding for both the system and prospective candidates. An evaluation of the process may reveal that some steps are superfluous. And third, the University of Swaziland's regulation pertaining to the admission of past failures of the university through the scheme seems superfluous, given the provisions of the general regulations. The university may wish to reconsider this regulation.

- (iv) Universities may want to strike a balance between the preservation of their images as places of excellence for the education of the young and the need to serve society at large. A quota of 10–20% for mature age entrants seems acceptable to university “administrators,” while anything less than 10% may threaten the viability of the mature age entry scheme.
- (v) As presently constituted, mature age entry schemes complement existing university entrance qualifications without threatening existing university standards. As such, they enable universities to broaden the scope of their services to the community and thereby enhance their image in the community. It therefore seems justified to suggest that all universities in the region, and perhaps in the developing world as a whole, should adopt such a scheme.

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ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION FOR GIRLS: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

Deborah Egunyomi

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the issue of access for females or girls to basic education in Nigeria, particularly with reference to the Jomtien (1990) declaration and other subsequent national and global efforts to give girls access to basic education. The data presented in the context of these efforts show a wide disparity between the male and female child access to basic education in Nigeria. Our intention here is to articulate Nigeria's current position on girls' access to basic education. Our analysis shows that, despite the efforts, resources, and time spent, there still exists a considerable gap between the North and the South with respect to giving girls access to basic education.

No development strategy is better than one that involves women as central players. Such a strategy has immediate benefits for nutrition, health, savings, and reinvestment at the family, community, and, ultimately, national levels. In other words, educating girls is a social development policy that works. "It is long-term investment that yields an exceptionally high return" (Annan, 2002).

Education has been universally recognized as the key to sustainable development and the enhancement of human welfare. The World Bank (2003) observed that

Education is development, it creates choices and opportunities for people, reduces the twin burden of poverty and diseases, and gives a stronger voice to society. For nations, it creates a dynamic workforce and well informed citizens able to compete and cooperate globally, opening doors to economic and social prosperity.

It was in the realization of the invaluable role and impact of education locally and globally that the World Conference on Education for All (EFA)

was convened in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, where the *World Declaration on Education for All* was adopted, and in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal, where the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* was endorsed.

The *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* emphasized the need for both quality in and access to basic education. It also set targets and timelines for achieving the strategies. These include eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005; ensuring that all children, particularly girls, have access to basic education, which must be free, compulsory, and high quality by 2005; achieving gender equality in education with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to high quality basic education.

2. WHAT COMMITMENTS HAVE GOVERNMENTS MADE TO ENSURE THAT GIRLS' RIGHTS ARE REALIZED?

The *Beijing Platform for Action* (1995) called for the following actions, among others, to be taken:

Section 82 (a) Advance the goal of equal access to basic education by taking measures to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender, race, language, national origin, age disability, or any other form of discrimination.

Section 82 (b) By the year 2000, provide universal access to basic education and ensure completion of primary education by at least 80 per cent of primary school-age children; closing the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005; universal primary education in the country before the year 2015.

Section 83 (a) Reduce the female illiteracy rate to at least half its 1990 level.

Section 180 (m) Set specific target dates for eliminating all forms of child labour that are contrary to accepted international standards and ensure the full enforcement of relevant existing laws and . . . implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Labour Organization standards, ensuring the protection of working children, in particular street children, through the provision of appropriate health, education and other social services.

Section 230 (n) Address the acute problems of children by supporting efforts . . . aimed at . . . the prevention and eradication of female infanticide,

harmful child labour, the sale of children and their organs, child prostitution, child pornography and other forms of sexual abuse.

Like other countries, Nigeria has been responding to this development. Even before the *World Declaration* in Jomtien, Nigeria had realized the need for basic education for everyone and for equal opportunity for education for males and females alike. This is evident in the provisions of the country's National Policy on Education (1998):

Section 1, subsection 5(c) emphasized: "The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Both inside and outside system."

In Section 2, subsection 17(i), the policy stated that: "With a view to correcting the imbalance between different parts of the country, with reference to the availability of educational facilities and the number of pupils receiving formal and girls education . . . special efforts shall be made by all appropriate to encourage parents to send their daughters to school."

In Section 5, subsection 40, it stated that: "More efforts shall be made to encourage women to embrace technical education."

Nigeria evolved measures and strategies to translate the Jomtien and Dakar goals into reality. At the EFA Follow-up Workshop in 2001, Nigeria developed a national action plan that highlighted some challenges that the Nigerian government, in collaboration with its partners, must overcome within the next 14 years to ensure that girls have access to basic education. It identified the following challenges, among others:

- (1) Breaking down the barriers to access, retention, participation, and achievement of girls in education represents a serious challenge. This is particularly important in light of the gender balance targets of 2005 and 2015 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2001). In this connection, the Government of Nigeria set itself the following targets and strategies to be achieved by 2015:
 - (i) 95% of girls of primary-school age will be enrolled in primary school or its equivalent.
 - (ii) 80% of girls up to the age of 15 will be enrolled in a school-based or equivalent learning/education program.
 - (iii) 95% of working girls will have access to relevant basic education, with a special focus on hawkers, housekeepers, and groups of hard-to-reach girls.
 - (iv) 80% of all girls and women aged 15 and above will attain national standards set for literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving.
 - (v) Flexible access to relevant programs of education will be provided to disadvantaged groups, such as pregnant girls and young mothers, including the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) in women education centers.
 - (vi) By 2005, reduction of gender disparity in enrollment programs.

To achieve these targets, the following strategies have been adopted: establish sensitization programs on women- and girl-focused curriculum; initiate advocacy programs that mitigate cultural barriers to women's and girls' participation in educational programs; provide monitoring instruments and necessary facilities to enhance learning; establish flexible programs of access designed to mainstream young girls into formal basic education; increase women's and girls' awareness of their rights; increase functional basic education that is gender-sensitized and promotes partnerships (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2001).

3. BASIC EDUCATION

The terms "literacy" and "basic education" often occur in the same sentences, but there is a lack of clarity about what they mean in relation to each other and how national policy-makers think about these terms in educational planning. For instance, empirical evidence from many countries of Southern Africa, including Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, make no clear distinction between these concepts. This is because policy-makers in these countries are reluctant to draw a distinction between them due to the changing nature of literacy (Semali, 1999). In the case of literacy, the concern lies less with mastery of particular reading or writing subskills than with the differing contexts in which individuals are asked to read and write in various life situations, particularly in school.

Past attempts to define "basic education" have not sufficiently embraced the notions of the primary cycle of formal education. One could, for example, describe basic education as a "supplement," not a "rival," to formal education; it is intended to provide functional, flexible, and low-cost education for those whom the formal system has yet to reach or has already bypassed.

From this perspective, basic education and literacy aim to do the same thing, namely to be employed whenever basic education is missing in non-literate adults. This view takes basic education to be a second chance or supplement to what schools failed to provide, which invariably qualifies it as a nonformal system of education.

The Nigerian educational system stage-classification, as stated in the 1998 National Policy on Education, comprises 6 years of primary education, 3 of junior secondary education, 3 of senior secondary education, and 4 years of university education. Basic education falls within the first 9 years of schooling of a child up to the end of junior secondary school. This type of education is intended to provide children with access to the basic literacy skills of reading, writing, and numeracy—the so-called 3Rs. Basic

education aims to impart a fundamental knowledge of the 3Rs so as to make people functional in society. So, at the junior secondary school, all children, including girls, are expected to have acquired basic skills in reading, writing, and numeracy. It is a basic building block for practical functioning in the face of socioeconomic challenges.

4. GIRLS

Gender-biased educational processes, including curriculum, educational materials and practices, teachers' attitudes, and classroom interaction, reinforce existing gender inequalities. Such inequalities are most pronounced in the extent of girls' participation at all levels of social, economic, political, and cultural activity in society relative to boys' participation therein.

Girls are thus described as young adolescent females, biological beings whose role in life is limited by their natural biological characteristics. Girls and adolescents may receive a variety of conflicting and confusing messages regarding their gender roles from their parents, teachers, peers, and the media. This often leads to consistent gender stereotyping, which does not take into account the rights of the child and the responsibilities, rights, and duties of parents as stated in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN, 1989: Art. 2, Para. 267).

Girls' awareness level concerning participation in social, economic, and political life is based on the level of basic education that they are able to access beyond all sociocultural barriers or limitations. It is only this access that enhances girls' awareness of economic and political issues and enables them to formulate and express their views.

Girls therefore require a high level of both natural and psychological basic education to nurture them and help them develop.

5. GIRLS' EDUCATION

The place, role, and importance of girls' education deserve all the attention that can be expended on them because of the significant contribution that their education makes to economic and sustainable development. In fact, basic education for girls has been singled out as the most urgent priority in attaining EFA objectives.

Colossal benefits accrue from the education of girls. It has a far-reaching impact on girls' cultural, social, political, and economic lives. Their education is normally associated with reduced infant and maternal mortality rates, increased working skills, better hygiene and nutrition, utilization of family planning and health services, improved management of

household resources, and increased economic productivity. The education of girls also liberates them from the shackles of abuse, oppression, poverty, exclusion, harmful cultural practices, culturally based limitations on their rights, early and untimely marriage, and provides each girl with the opportunity to make informed decisions about her life since it enables her full participation in the society in which she finds herself. It also elevates them to the state of partner in progress with men instead of continuing to be seen as a “liability.” It allows them the freedom to choose their own husband when they are ready for marriage and it promotes the full development of their children due to a ripple or “trickle down” effect.

5.1 Factors militating against girls’ education

It has been observed that a number of factors work together to exclude girls from basic education (Global March against Child Labour, 1998; FGN/UNICEF, 2001; UNESCO, 2002). They include the following:

Poverty and sociocultural factors: Poverty in Nigeria became highly intensified upon the collapse of oil boom, with more than half of the population living below the poverty line in 1996; rural areas and the North suffered most. It became very difficult for many parents to send their children, particularly girls, to school and to provide the supporting environmental and psychological structures for progress in their learning. The direct and indirect costs of sending children to school become too burdensome to parents who have been severely affected by the country’s weakened economy. Coupled with rapid population growth and inequitable economic policies, poverty constitutes the major barrier to girls’ access to education.

Consequently children (especially girls) who should be in school have to help to lighten their parents’ burden by helping them on the farm or in rural areas by doing time-consuming chores, such as washing, fetching water and firewood, and caring for young babies at home. In the urban areas such school-age children engage in hawking to help their parents. In such situations, the general preference for boys normally tempts parents, who hold the key to enrollment, into giving priority to the boys rather than the girls. It is generally believed that investing in girls’ education will benefit only the family into which the girl will eventually marry.

Hence, the education of boys is considered more important than that of girls, which is why boys tend to be favored in the provision of material support, such as learning materials, or in extrinsic motivation. On the other hand, girls are made to help in the funding of boys’ education by assisting parents in income-earning activities. Girls’ burden at home circumscribe their opportunities and thus their achievements; they have little or no time to do their homework, to read, or to attend extra lessons. They are also too tired to concentrate during their classes at school.

The pessimism attending girls' basic education opens the way for other inhibiting factors, such as the flippancy with which parents handle their female children, setting them up for moral laxity. The occurrence of teenage pregnancy and early marriage puts an end to girls' education. This is more pronounced in rural areas and the Northern part of the country. In the Northwest, for example, 55% of girls aged 15–19 are either already mothers or are pregnant (FGN/UNICEF, 2001). Since the school system in Nigeria does not accommodate pregnant girls, they must automatically drop out of school.

Early marriage, especially in the Northern part of the country, militates against girls' basic education. The median age of marriage has been found to be 15.1 years in the Northeast and only 14.7 years in the Northwest (FGN/UNICEF, 2001). Of girls aged 20–24, 20% were already married by the age of 15 and 40% by the age of 18. In some parts of the North, girls get married even earlier than these average figures suggest. The impact of this on girls' access to basic education cannot be underestimated. For example, the 1999 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey found that 19% of girls aged 15–24 who had dropped out of school did so as a result of marriage (AGI, 1997). Women in *purdah* (seclusion from the public) are also denied access to basic education in Nigeria. The worst part of it is that many young girls of school age are in *purdah* (FGN/UNICEF, 2001).

The educational system itself constitutes a barrier to girls' access to basic education. Parents are often in doubt about the benefits of education in terms of its functionality; they suspect that it raises false expectations in girls regarding their conditions and needs and thus deters these girls from engaging in productive work on the farm. Hence, parents tend to pull their daughters out of school. That explains why schoolgirls are always absent in schools on market days and at the peak of work on the farm.

Textbooks, instructional materials, and admission policies and school plans are gender-biased. School buildings and the school environment are not conducive to learning. Dilapidated buildings and overcongested classrooms are not girl-friendly; boys by nature may be able to bear some physical hardships, while girls may not be. The assertive nature of boys over girls may also further put off girls in coeducational settings. In the Northern part of the country, religious orientation also prevents girls from attending the same schools as boys.

Gender stereotyping in the school curriculum and the academic streaming process constitute a barrier to girls' access to basic education. Some subjects are still gender-tagged—for instance, home economics is deemed to be for girls, while mathematics and the sciences are the province for boys. Such tagging prevents exposure of both sexes to the benefits of these subjects and also limits the professions that girls can pursue in the future. Graphic illustrations and instructional materials carry external language

that portrays gender roles in a stereotyped manner. This goes a long way towards limiting girls’ future endeavors. Inspectors, head-teachers, and teachers exhibit negative attitudes towards girls. This is due to the cultural inferiority associated with females in the traditional African society. For instance, in a situation where a girl leads the class in academics, teachers would want to hide the fact that the boys have been lazy.

The data in Table 26-1 reveals a gap in literacy levels between boys and girls in 1999; the difference was about 10% in favor of boys.

In Table 26-2 one can see that in 1990, 61.5% of the illiterate population in Nigeria aged 15 and over were girls and 38.5% were boys, whereas in 2000, 72.8% of illiterates were girls and 27.2% boys. This indicates that boys have greater access to basic education than girls.

From Table 26-3, it can be observed that from 1990 to 1999 the primary and secondary school enrollment rates for boys consistently exceed those for girls. Boys clearly have greater access to education in Nigeria than girls.

Table 26-4 indicates that for the population aged 5–29, 19.7% males and 30.81% females had no education, while 26.4% males and 50.5% females had Quranic education. 121% males and 119.1% females did not complete primary education, and 46.6% of males and 53% of females completed primary education. 112.3% of males and 107.8% of females did not complete secondary education and 96.4% of males and 81.6% of females completed secondary education.

From Table 26-5 it is revealed that enrollment is higher among boys than girls. This is more pronounced at age 16 and above, when boys are more likely to be motivated to go for higher schooling and girls are in some cases and in some regions are being lured into teenage marriages. According to Okpani (2003), research has indicated that there is a widening gap between the North and the South in the pursuit of education, with the North having particularly serious problems with girls’ education.

Table 26-1. Data on youth educational indicators.

Education compulsory age	Age	Years	6–12
Illiterate girls	15+	1999	42.9%
Illiterate boys	15+	1999	32.7%

Source: UNESCO (2002).

Table 26-2. Estimated illiteracy rate and illiterate population aged 15 and over.

Year of census	Age	Illiteracy rate (%)			Illiteracy population ('000s)		
		Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
1990	15+	100	38.5	61.5	24,338	9,426	14,912
2000	15+	100	27.2	72.8	22,802	8,639	14,163

Source: UNESCO (2003).

Table 26-3. Gross enrollment rate by level of education for boys and girls (aged 15 and over).

Year	Sex	Primary % enrollment	Secondary % enrollment
1990	M	104	29
	F	79	21
1994	M	109	36
	F	87	30
1999	M	100	60
	F	79	58

Source: UNESCO (2003).

Table 26-4. Percentage distribution of educational attainment of males and females age group (%) in 1998.

Age group years	None		Quranic		Primary incomplete		Primary complete		Secondary incomplete		Secondary complete	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	5-9	8.7	13.11	9.1	9.6	76.3	71.6	5.9	5.7	-	-	-
10-14	3.0	2.7	4.8	6.5	36.9	37.3	16.8	14.6	35.6	37.0	2.3	1.8
15-19	2.4	3.4	3.9	7.5	4.1	4.4	12.4	13.5	51.6	47.3	19.6	18.0
20-24	2.4	5.8	4.0	12.0	1.6	2.6	5.2	9.1	17.4	15.4	41.7	33.7
25-29	3.2	5.8	4.6	14.9	2.1	3.2	6.3	10.1	7.7	8.1	32.8	28.1
Total	19.7	30.81	26.4	50.5	121	119.1	46.6	53	112.3	107.8	96.4	81.6

Source: Odumosu et al. (1998).

Table 26-5. School enrollment by age group and sex (%) in 1998.

6-10		11-15		16-20		21-24	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
66.5	63.8	75.6	74.5	68.5	58.8	56.1	41.5

Source: Odumosu et al. (1998).

The gender gap in Nigeria decreased from 1990 to 1991 and 1992, rose again in 1993 and decreased steadily up to 1996 (Table 26-6). The embarrassing increase experienced between 1993 and 1994 may have been connected with the political logjam in the country at that time. Likewise, the government's and policy-makers' attention may have been distracted by the political crisis at that time. The drop in 1996 to 10% could be a result of the seriousness with which the EFA action plan was implemented in the country.

Table 26-6. Primary school gender gap (national).

Years	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Gender gap (%)	17	16	16	18	17	14	10

Source: UNESCO (2000).

6. THE CURRENT TREND

In its attempt to realize the EFA goals, the Nigerian government has identified a number of shortcomings plaguing its educational system. It has implemented many strategies to boost the quantity, quality, and efficiency of its educational system in order to facilitate girls' access to basic education in the country.

Counterbalancing this decrease are some socioeconomic impediments, as reported by Okpani (2003):

The Federal Ministry of Education lists literacy rates from 57% in 1996 to 49% in 1999 for women. The literacy rate is even worse declining from 44% to 41% in the same period. The rate of illiteracy is much more in the Northern states than the rest of the country. For instance only 21–22% North-West and North-East were literate in 1999. The gross primary school enrolment rate started falling by 1994, in 1992; it was 90.3% for boys and 71.9 for girls. In 1993 it was 93.6% for boys and 83.2% for girls, while as at 1995 it stood at 85.5% for boys and 74.9% for girls.

The reasons for this lapse range from poverty to the wrongful belief that Islamic religion is against the education of girls, the belief that Western education as anti-Islamic, the practice of early marriage, and apathy towards girls' education. Some people also believe that another person (i.e., a boy) is going to benefit from the education given to a girl.

The challenge in Nigeria is significant and calls for urgent attention because: "Of the 3.2 million children who are out of school, 2.6 million of them are girls" (UNICEF cited in Ashiante, 2003). Moreover, the position of Nigeria as a prominent member of the group of 25 countries that have pledged to accelerate by 2005 the strategies adopted earlier needs to be reviewed periodically to accommodate the socioeconomic and political setbacks in Nigeria.

To meet the target of reducing gender disparity in enrollment from 10% to 0.9% in all education programs by 2005, an all-embracing strategy for executing the EFA plan of action is required, a strategy that takes into account the peculiar characteristics, features, and problems of each region, state, and local government. This would involve setting up stakeholder committees on zones, states, and local governments, which would discharge their duties in line with the sociocultural and political realities of their areas of jurisdiction.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings canvassed above, the following recommendations can be made:

- (i) To improve girls' access to basic education a holistic approach is required that has the input of all stakeholders in the education sector. Vigorous advocacy strategies that involve all stakeholders need to be put in place.
- (ii) Private–public partnership is imperative for enhancing girls' access to basic education.
- (iii) An institutional framework needs to be established if girls are to receive full access to basic education.
- (iv) It is necessary to overhaul the curriculum to accommodate the socio-economic and cultural reality of our time as it affects the basic education of girls.
- (v) There is dire need for gender issues to be mainstreamed into Nigeria's entire educational system.
- (vi) Owing to the country's sociocultural diversity, different educational policies must be developed for different regions of the country.

8. CONCLUSION

The issue of girls' access to basic education has been the focus of the debate over girls' future development and the achievement of equality of opportunity and gender balance in education. The present chapter has provided a contextual analysis of girls' access to basic education in Nigeria by considering school enrollment and retention against the background of the overall agenda in EFA. It has shown that the enrollment rate for girls is still very low, retention is poor, and the quest for upward progression is severely limited by sociocultural and socioeconomic conditions, all of which are rooted in the Nigerian learning environment.

To achieve greater access to basic education for girls, it is necessary that parents, communities, and the government (policy-makers) show greater commitment to instating gender balance between males and females in the Nigerian educational system in keeping with the EFA plan of action. This would cut across all cultural, institutional, and regional boundaries. Providing all girls with access to basic education will give rise to greater freedom, participation, and development, all of which are key elements of sustainable development not only in Nigeria.

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PART V

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: FUTURE POLICY THRUSTS

Augustus A. Adeyinka

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to provide a look into the future of education based on past and present experiences in global education, with particular reference to Africa as a part of the global village. The global village itself could be pictured as a great tree, with many branches, providing shade for all. Africa is one of the branches. And the past, the present, and the future of education in Africa cannot be discussed in isolation from what is happening in other parts of the global village.

Before the introduction of European culture into Africa, education on the continent was purely indigenous. At the local level, we refer to this type of education as indigenous education because it is peculiar to the indigenes of a particular community. At the continental level, it is commonly referred to as “African traditional education” (ATE), that is, the kind of education prevalent in Africa before the advent of Western education. Every member of the society had access to ATE, and the entire community was the teacher. Also, ATE did not leave room for unemployment or underemployment since teaching and learning went hand in hand with profitable occupational activities. Today, a considerable amount of literature is available on that type of education (e.g., Majasan, 1967; Snelson, 1974; Tiberondwa, 1978; Adeyinka, 2000a; Coetzee and Roux, 2000). With the arrival of Christian missionaries and colonial administrators in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Western culture—notably British, French, Spanish, and Portuguese—gradually, and in varying degrees of intensity, spread into many parts of the continent. The Christian missions, and later the colonial administrators, brought with them Western culture, which led to the introduction of Western ways of life and formal education, with its emphasis on literary and purely academic work. African parents readily accepted this

new education and began to send their children to the schools in the belief that school education would offer the beneficiaries ample opportunities for further studies and, subsequently, lucrative “white collar” jobs. But it was not long before the “white collar” jobs had all been taken, and there began a long process of unemployment and underemployment among graduates of the formal institutions of learning.

One major impact of the introduction and acceptance of the Western type of education in Africa was the wholesale abandonment of ATE and all the benefits and values associated with it. Over the last half century, there has been increasing concern about the relevance of school education, since it has tended to breed a new class of unemployed, sometimes unemployable youths, for schools have failed to provide youths with the kind of education they need to survive in the twenty-first-century world of science and technology. This explains why the deschoolers, prominent among whom was Ivan Illich, have called for the abolition of the school as it now operates and the introduction of knowledge and skills development centers, where individuals could acquire, from an early age, the knowledge and skills needed for life and work in diversified global economies in the twenty-first century. According to deschoolers, just this should be the focus of the education of the future in the global context.

However, the deschoolers’ recommendation is too revolutionary, insofar as it has the potential to destroy all that the nations of the world have struggled for over several centuries, thereby ushering in the total collapse of existing education delivery structures and processes. In principle, future education, in a global context, could accommodate deschoolers’ call for the establishment of knowledge and skills centers, which could be patronized by citizens who have been to school, or are still in school; the purpose of such centers would then be to build on what has been gained from formal schooling. This is what the Open University and distance education systems in various tertiary institutions in many countries of the world are currently doing. Future policy thrusts in widening access to education in an era of globalization should take account of these existing structures, develop and build on them, making extensive use of the mass media and the Internet, so that everyone can have access to all types and levels of education that are available in the global village in which we now live. Other aspects of the education delivery process to be discussed in this chapter, such as teacher education and the secondary school examinations system, hinge on this proposal. To fully understand the present and predict the future of education in the global village, it is necessary that we, as historians and philosophers of education, probe into the past of our educational systems, appreciate the values of the education of the past, the problems of present-day education, and how the future education delivery process could build on past experiences and opportunities, as well as the facilities and problems inherent in present systems.

2. PRINCIPLES OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

Like any effective system of education, customary education in Africa was based on sound philosophical foundations. Ocitti (1973) rightly identified these foundations, or principles, as preparationism, functionalism, communalism, perennialism, and holism. The principle of preparationism, which underlined both formal and informal educational practices, implied that the role of learning and teaching was to equip boys and girls with the skills appropriate to their gender in preparation for their distinctive roles in society. Precolonial education, even in the most centralized and stratified societies, was gender-based, with boys and girls receiving the kind of education that enabled them to fulfill masculine and feminine responsibilities, respectively. Male education thus produced farmers, warriors, blacksmiths, rulers, and other workers in male-dominated occupations from which women were excluded. On the other hand, female education was predominantly designed to produce future wives and mothers. Furthermore, the principle of preparationism also meant that male and female education prepared its recipients to adjust to the community and to play a useful role in it. Children developed a sense of obligation towards the community and grew to appreciate its history, language, customs, and values. This is perhaps one of the greatest attributes of indigenous education as opposed to Western education, which has tended to alienate young Africans from their cultural heritage (Kelly, 1991).

Related to the principle of preparationism was the principle of functionalism. With few exceptions, if any, traditional educational practices in precolonial African societies were predominantly utilitarian (Ocitti, 1973). It was a participatory kind of education in which people learned through imitation, initiation ceremonies, work, play, oral literature, etc. In this way, the learner was productive as he or she learned and was smoothly integrated into the community: the gap that exists today between study and the world of work was absent in precolonial society. Indeed, there was no unemployment in African traditional societies.

The third principle of ATE was communalism. In such education, all members of the society owned things in common and applied the communal spirit to life and work. Children belonged to the community, and every member of the community had a stake in their upbringing. For example, if a child misbehaved while the parents were not around, any other adult member of the community could discipline and correct him or her on the spot. Clearing, planting, and harvesting were done in groups, on a shift basis; for example, a group could clear Mr. A's farm on one day and move

on to clear Mr. B's farm on the following day. The process was repeated during planting and harvesting seasons, as well as in the building of huts. There was also in place the thrift and credit system whereby individual members of the community contributed fixed amounts in cowries (white shells used as currencies in African traditional societies) at regular intervals, to be collected by a member of the group at a specified time. For example, if Mr. A collected the group's contribution at the end of one week, it would be Mr. B's turn to collect it at the end of the following week. This was a form of compulsory saving for all adult members of the community, and the money collected in bulk could be used for a worthwhile venture, such as buying some farm products for sale in the local market or marrying a new wife.

Perennialism constituted the fourth philosophical foundation of indigenous education. Most traditional communities in Africa perceived education as a vehicle for maintaining or preserving the cultural heritage and status quo. This partly accounts for why traditional teachers discouraged pupils from experimenting with the unknown and imposed heavy sanctions on those who tried to do so. In short, education in indigenous African communities was conservative in nature. Because of this, it had only a little progressive influence on the minds of young people (Ocitti, 1973; Snelson, 1974; Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2000).

The fifth philosophical foundation of ATE was holism, or multiple learning. It is true that in economically, socially, and practically advanced societies, such as those of the Zulu, Ashanti, and Nupe, there was a high degree of specialization in learning. However, as noted above, few African societies developed to that extent. In most societies, education provided little or no room for specialization, but equipped both boys and girls to undertake a multitude of occupations that required related skills. Among the Acholi of Uganda, for example, a boy who was taught to construct a house was also expected to learn related lessons, such as the geography of a building site with regard to the source of water, geology, and the location of neighboring villages. He was also expected to possess knowledge of the right types of trees and grass for construction of walls and for thatching (Ocitti, 1973). Similarly, a child destined to become a fisherman learned not only to catch fish but also to preserve and market the catch, to make and mend nets, to manufacture canoes, and to erect temporary fishing huts. The holistic nature of customary education enabled young people to acquire a variety of skills, which made them productive in many ways. An individual in most nonliterate communities could therefore embark on a variety of occupations without difficulty. He could work as a builder, farmer, or fisherman, while a woman was a gardener, housewife, and cook, besides being a nurse to her children, etc.

3. THE CONTENT AND METHODS OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL EDUCATION

The society was a key factor in determining the content of instruction in precolonial Africa. The traditional African society expected the child to grow up and behave according to some accepted norms. The content or subject matter of traditional educational systems emanated from the physical, social, and spiritual situations of precolonial African societies. The physical environment influenced the content of the curriculum in that what was taught was meant to assist the child in adjusting and adapting to the environment in order to exploit and derive benefit from it. As Castle (1966: 40) argues, "Whether the child's habitat was dominated by mountain, plain, river or tropical forest, he had to learn to combat its dangers and use its fertility." To come to terms with physical environment, the growing child learned about the landscape, the weather, and plant and animal life. As the child grew, he or she learned to understand the uses of both plants and animals in his or her locality, in addition to the taboos associated with them.

The physical situation further influenced what practical skills the child learned in order to prepare him or her for future responsibilities. Boys and girls who lived in fishing areas, for example, learned such skills as were required to catch, preserve, and market fish, and manufacture and mend fish-traps, nets, and canoes. In wooded areas, like the northeastern part of Zambia, where the "cut and burn" system of agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, children from the age of 6 acquired much knowledge of trees and their household uses (Rodney, 1972). In both cases, the educational practices of each society were influenced by the physical environment and were meant to prepare the learner to live and work in and profit from the given environment. If the physical situation had a bearing on the subject matter, so did the social environment. The survival of most traditional communities was to a large measure dependent upon a network of reciprocal relationships that knit the family, clan, and tribe together. Traditional educational systems were meant to reinforce such relationships. It is therefore not surprising that parents and other adults in the community ceaselessly gave their children instruction in social etiquette, which upheld reciprocal ties. Children were taught to respect elders, to appreciate their social obligations and responsibilities, and, above all, to subordinate their individual interests to those of the wider community (Ocitti, 1973; Snelson, 1974; Tiberondwa, 1978; Mwanakatwe, 1974).

The content of traditional curriculum also derived from the spiritual environment. In precolonial Africa, where every event (like the birth of a child, death, sickness, flood, or drought) was accorded spiritual significance, education tended to focus on religious teaching or instruction. Young children received instruction on the influence of both malevolent and

benevolent spirits, and purification practices; they were also taught the value of propitiating the spirits to avert such disasters as sickness, death, and pestilence. It may indeed be argued that a greater portion of indigenous education in Africa centered on religious training. Religion played a key role in the life of children and adults alike: it provided a rallying point for the community and backed up socially accepted values and norms, such as honesty, generosity, diligence, and hospitality (Castle, 1966; Ocitti, 1973). The contents of traditional African education are intimately tied to their cardinal goals as identified by Fafunwa (1974: 9, 20–49).

In African traditional societies, as in a number of educational institutions today, a wide variety of teaching methods were used to transmit knowledge and skills. In societies like the Nupe and the Ashanti of West Africa, amongst whom education was a highly specialized activity, formal means of teaching were common and professional teachers existed. Such teachers taught a predetermined body of knowledge in an organized sequence over a period of time, sometimes lasting many years. They also received payments in kind from parents of their pupils, though these were usually called “gifts.” Professional teachers were used in training young children in diplomacy, medicine, hunting, copper- and iron-manufacturing, and other specialized occupations. Both theoretical and practical approaches were employed in teaching, with pupils being encouraged to recite poems, riddles, songs, etc. “Schools” and “classes” were usually located in secluded places or at the king’s or chief’s palace. The graduation of pupils from such “schools” took place after they had sufficiently mastered their courses; it was often marked by feasting, ceremonial dancing, and rejoicing (Tiberondwa, 1978). In other places, the informal method was used, with emphasis on imitation and learning by doing. Initiation of boys and girls into adulthood was an important aspect of ATE. In most societies that practiced initiation ceremonies, the end of the initiation itself was marked by circumcision for boys and clitorrectomy for girls, which in turn symbolized the transition of the initiated from childhood to adulthood (Kenyatta, 1968; Rodney, 1972; Datta, 1984). In other words, the initiation ceremony signaled that the initiates had attained the stage of adulthood, and higher social and domestic responsibilities were passed on to them (Adeyinka, 1998).

4. WESTERN EDUCATION IN AFRICA

The history of Western-oriented, Christian education in Africa was intimately bound up with the history of Western education in Europe during and after the Middle Ages. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, the old literary and rhetorical education of the Roman Era was

almost completely destroyed because it was considered pagan in spirit. The Church was therefore not enthusiastic to revive it, and it became indifferent to education for a time. Soon, however, the Church saw that it could not do its work effectively unless its adherents were able to read and write. It realized the advantage of an education that was tailored to its needs, for unlike the Roman schools, which were secular, the Church schools were religiously oriented. With the transfer of educational authority from the state to the Church, the curriculum was changed in both nature and purpose. The ultimate reason for any form of education was the advantage it brought to the faith. "The typical man of learning was no longer the cultivated man of affairs but the educated clerk; and all the secular business of society which required the hands of churchmen" (Boyd, 1966: 99–101). The Church's monopoly on education lasted for more than a thousand years. This had a tremendous impact on the intellectual life of Europe and America and later on the British colonial territories in Asia and Africa (Diop, 1999).

The arrival of various Christian missionaries in African countries has been well documented (Groves, 1948–1958; Ajayi, 1965; Ayandele, 1966; Adeyinka, 1993). They came to most parts of Africa between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Nigeria, for example, they came between 1842 and 1860. First to come were the Wesleyan Methodists, who landed in Badagry in September 1842, followed in quick succession by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (December 1842), the American Baptist mission in 1852, and finally the Roman Catholics (RCM) in 1860. As soon as they came, the various Christian missions began to build churches where they preached and made converts, and the schools where they taught the converts the rudiments of Christian life and Western civilization. Instruction was given basically in the Four R's—reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion. The Christian missions initially had no intention of providing instruction beyond the primary school level. The original idea was to train teachers of the catechisms, interpreters, clerks, and cooks. The idea of secondary education was later developed, and was run primarily by the early converts and products of these early mission schools. Most of the early missionaries that operated in Nigeria, as in other English-speaking African countries, were British, and they worked hand in hand with the administration based in Lagos to introduce Western education and culture into this part of Africa (Adeyinka, 2001). The situation in other African countries was basically the same. Educated Africans readily accepted the new culture because it placed them far above the other members of the society, and some of them even became more European than the Europeans themselves. In Botswana and Zambia the Christian missions began to appear in the 1880s, and they immediately engaged themselves in religious and educational activities similar to those described above with respect to Nigeria. As can be seen from Charles Grove's four-volume *The Planting of*

Christianity in Africa, the pattern of infiltration of the Christian missions into various countries in Africa and the processes of evangelization and schooling they adopted were very similar (Groves, 1948–1958).

5. IMPACT: SCHOOL EDUCATION IN AFRICA TODAY

One area in which the educated elite in Africa have gone Western was in the acceptance of Western-style formal education, with its emphasis on literary and academic work, as a model of education for Africa. The consequence has been the intensification of the process of acceptance of the literacy tradition introduced by the Christian missions through formal classroom education. This gradually led to a general acceptance of the Western system of education, Western culture and ways of life. A further outcome of this acceptance and the new values that accompanied it was the gradual decline of enthusiasm for agricultural pursuits and other forms of manual labor, which had been the major occupations of the various African peoples before the advent of the Christian missions and the formal education they brought with them.

The wholesale acceptance of Western education and ways of life has inevitably led to people's preference for "white collar" jobs and the large-scale migration of people to large towns where such jobs were available. These new developments have been responsible for the rapid process of detribalization, acculturation, and urbanization, resulting in the subsequent and current problem of unemployment and underemployment among school leavers in the various African countries. Beyond primary school, the average African child would like to have full secondary school education, as the prerequisite to university education, which would qualify him or her for entry into such lucrative professions as medicine, law, engineering, and politics. Thus, today the possession of a university degree is the ambition of every African child, for it is supposed to guarantee a minimum of individual comfort and adequate financial means to live a happy and contented life. This is understandable, since Africa is not yet an industrial society and only adequate academic qualifications can open the doors to occupational success (Adeyinka, 1998, 2004). But should the emphasis be on academic certificates, diplomas, and degrees?

However, it is not only on the African educational system that the West has exerted considerable influence; its influence is noticeable in other areas of African culture—for example, in our food and drinking habits, dressing, religion, and marital life. Thus, today, many Africans copy the eating, dressing, and drinking habits of the West. In our religious life, we tend to imitate the British, French, etc.—going to church on Sunday, attending mass, and

partaking of the Lord's Supper. And we tend to associate the British monogamous life with Christianity and Christian ways of life, thus accepting monogamous marriage as an integral part of our culture. But in traditional African society, polygamy was, and still largely is, generally recognized as a legitimate way of life.

Experience today shows that most products of the secondary schools, including those with good certificates, are unemployed, while only a few of those aspiring to higher education succeed in gaining admission to polytechnics, colleges of education, and universities. Instead of widening, access to postsecondary institutions in most African countries is shrinking (Adeyinka, 1988, 2003), thus widening the gap between the poorly educated and the fully educated Africans, between the employed/employable and the unemployed/unemployable, between the rich and the poor, between the haves and have-nots, between the privileged and the deprived, between the African elite and the downtrodden masses who have been denied access to various types of educational institutions in Africa.

The foregoing scenario would seem to justify the call for an abolition of the school system (because the schools have perpetuated the concept of limited access to learning and are not satisfying the immediate needs of society) and the provision of more useful alternative structures for the training of individuals so as to enable them to render services that are more useful to themselves and their respective local communities. This is the point at which we have to take up the ideas of Illich and the European and American deschoolers, in order to make some suggestions about what could be the nature of institutionalized education in twenty-first-century Africa; for it was indeed against the process of schooling and the limited values of the school that Illich and the deschoolers have directed their attack. As will be seen below, Illich's philosophy seems to point to a return to the traditional African educational system, which did not have room for unemployment or redundancy and the social vices attached to this condition of life.

6. CRITICS OF THE MODERN SCHOOL SYSTEM

The foremost critics of the modern school system are the European and American deschoolers. Prominent among these was Ivan Illich. The role of the British middle class in the history of secondary schooling in Britain, and subsequently in the British colonies, has been adequately documented (Roach, 1971; Adeyinka, 2000b). At the end of World War II, schooling was extended to make junior secondary, and later senior secondary, education universal. Universal secondary education has been subject to serious criticism because it no longer serves the purposes, aims, and objectives of education for lifelong experience in a rapidly shrinking world: the global

community. In this section we shall briefly review the criticisms leveled and the issues raised by radical and conservative critics such as Ivan Illich and the deschooling movement since the early 1960s. The politically radical critics of the modern schooling system have been of two kinds: the neo-Rousseauians, with an anarchistic learning, such as Illich (1971) and Goodman (1962), and the neo-Marxists, such as, Carnoy (1974), Levin (1977), and Bowles and Gintis (1976). The neo-Rousseauians advocate the complete deschooling of society, while the neo-Marxists suggest a preservation of the school as an institution, but add that the school should be reshaped such that it could provide society with a new order of production. The conservative critics contend that standards, particularly basic skills, have continuously been slipping out of the school system. They further argue that schools should be differentiated and thus be made more responsive to the abilities and needs of the youths and adolescents passing through the school system.

From the conservative criticism of the school over the past few decades, four reasons have emerged for the drop in secondary education standards worldwide. Husén (1979: 20–21) outlines them as follows:

1. The broadening of access to institutions at the secondary and postsecondary levels has lowered standards.
2. Intellectual rigor and work discipline have deteriorated because of the removal of incentives, such as marks and competitive examinations, and because of more emphasis on affective objectives and social development than on cognitive achievements.
3. Gifted children have been neglected as a consequence of the acceptance of dogmatic egalitarianism according to which there are no inherent differences and therefore no reason to differentiate between more and less able pupils.
4. Labor-market-oriented education has yielded to an equality-oriented one, which overemphasizes the custodial functions of the school.

The criticisms of the conservatives were further exacerbated by the Sputnik experience in the late 1950s when the Soviet advantage in satellite technology was attributed in some quarters to more efficient teaching, particularly in science and mathematics, in the Soviet secondary school system, implying that there was a change in curriculum and teaching method. Critics of mass secondary education on both sides of the Atlantic were speaking on behalf of the universities, which were the main recipients of the products of secondary education. In the United States, the criticisms reflected a process of rapid change combined with spectacular expansion of the high school system, particularly in the early 1950s. Universalization of secondary school education led to the establishment of highly differentiated systems of programs and courses that could cater to all young people of secondary school age. This notion of the academically oriented high school

still prevails among university instructors who have found that the secondary school has fallen terribly short of the expected standards. The disappointment added a considerable amount of fuel to the fire set by the Sputnik experience. European countries had similar experiences after the period of rapid expansion of secondary school enrollment.

The major target of the criticisms was progressive education, or "life adjustment education." The principles upon which progressive education was built were essentially these: Education should be "child centered," that is to say, based on the child's real needs; the content of education, the curriculum, should reflect "life adjustment" by providing knowledge and skills that would prove useful in the child's life; education should match the level of the development of the child. The humanistic criticism against progressive education came from Hutchins (1953), who argued that if the object of education is the improvement of people, then any system of education that is without values is a contradiction in terms. The malaise, then, that besets education in the pragmatic age is the lack of recognition of the supremacy of values. A true education must include a study of values, and this cannot be done in a system designed to train specialists. The restoration of learning means the restoration of liberal education for the improvement of people. The object of liberal education is not to teach the young all they will ever need to know. Rather, it is to give them the habits, ideas, and techniques they need to continue to educate themselves.

The conservative and humanistic criticisms matched the criticisms of the deschoolers in the late 1960s, and these were directed against the school as an institution. The deschooling movement saw school, both in capitalist and socialist societies, as an oppressive and monopolistic instrument. The school in today's specialized and consumer-oriented society serves to manipulate people. The school, particularly in the Third World, serves only the elite in the modern sector and degrades those who are in the traditional sector; it reinforces the meritocratic element in society by participating in a repressive ritual of upward social mobility. The masses are lured into believing that education is a status-providing and liberating instrument, whereas it simply serves to make them addictively dependent on the services of a formal system of education (Illich, 1971). Illich argues that the school is the initiation into a society oriented towards the progressive consumption of increasingly less tangible and more expensive services, a society that relies on a worldwide standard of large scale and long-term planning, rendered constantly obsolete by the built-in ethos of never-ending improvement, the continuous translation of new needs into specific demands for consumption leading to new satisfaction (Illich, 1973).

The deschoolers argue that the school is an institution that promises limited success to a limited number of people. This is particularly striking when one observes what is happening in the developing countries of the

world, particularly Africa, where over the last few decades formal schooling of the European type has been introduced. Enrollments have soared. At all stages, there is a tremendous drive for more and more years of school education. No stage has a profile of its own, but is merely a preparation for the next stage; and since the important thing is the credentials, the full content of schooling is neglected. What the deschoolers are saying about schooling in Third World countries generally is true of the schooling systems in African countries; hence, it is necessary to revisit the secondary education curriculum and possibly replace it with one that would end in the twenty-first century the promises of unlimited hopes and successes that are never achieved through the present-day school system. Deschoolers like Illich want not only a change of curriculum but also of school structure and learning methodology. The idea of a structural change is contained in his notion of "learning webs," in which a good educational system would have three purposes: provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn from them; and finally give all those who want to present new ideas to the public the opportunity to do so (Illich, 1971: 75).

Today's secondary education cannot adequately fulfill these purposes of a good educational system because of its rigidly structured curriculum. The situation seems to have reached the point of crisis at the moment. Contemporary African society seems to be witnessing the end of the age of schooling. The school as a formal education system seems to have lost its former power, which reigned supreme during the first half of the twentieth century; it seems to have blinded its participants to the difference between the egalitarian myth its rhetoric serves and the rationalization of a stratified society its certificates produce. The loss of legitimacy of the schooling process as a means of determining competence, as a measure of social values, and as an agent of quality, threatens all economic and political systems that rely on schools as the means of reproducing themselves. In African countries, schools rationalize economic lag, particularly for the secondary school leavers. Most citizens are excluded from the scarce modern means of production and consumption, yet they long to enter the economy by passing through the school door. At the same time, the formal schools cannot guarantee its clients indisputable socioeconomic breakthroughs because the certificates they offered were generally academic, devoid of the knowledge and skills needed for profitable economic activity by individuals and the stability and survival of the group.

The irrelevance of the formal school system in present-day Africa cannot be emphasized enough. There is an urgent need for a reevaluation of the system for the twenty-first century to save our youth from the agony of commodity-knowledge that is not life-fulfilling. The rigidly structured

curriculum teaches all children that economically valuable knowledge is the result of professional teaching and that social entitlements depend on the rank achieved in the bureaucratic process. The rigid curriculum transforms the educational curriculum into a commodity and makes its acquisition the surest form of wealth. The growth of the consumer society has accelerated the tendency to objectify the ability to know. In competitive societies like those of African countries, knowledge is equated with capital. Consequently, the school is viewed as an institution that enables some to gain power and prestige over others. The longer a nation allows this type of situation to continue, the greater becomes the need in the youth to gain knowledge in order to survive in a hostile economic environment, a struggle that makes education and life frustrating and meaningless. Illich argues that the translation of the need for learning into the demand for schooling and the conversion of the quality of growing up into a price tag for professional treatment changes the meaning of knowledge from a term that means intimacy, intercourse, and life experience, into one that designates professionally packaged products, marketable entitlements, and abstract values (Illich, 1973: 39).

Despite all its ills and vices, the school cannot be so easily eliminated at this stage of development. This is because it performs some important functions, which are in line with the needs and aspirations of the people. To avoid a harsh posture of throwing away the baby with the bathwater, there is need to introduce the principle of complementary learning into the African secondary education system. It is believed that not only could the principle of complementary education be taken seriously, but that potentially it contains the most fruitful elements of much needed educational and social reforms that would make education life-fulfilling and rewarding. If the present formal, Western-oriented secondary education in Africa is complemented by the traditional education system, the African educational system would be given a new lease on life and become an education that would adequately equip the young to discover their beliefs and become critically aware of what they truly need for a rich existence. The need to complement the Western-oriented system of education with the traditional system is clearly seen from the fact that the traditional education is not tied to a rigid curriculum, to structured and manipulative examination processes, or to grades and certificates; it does not rely on compulsory attendance, nor does it expend more energy on custodial care than the imported educative process; it is not licensed by the state to wield a monopoly of "certifiable knowledge." The traditional system allowed children to know enough about the workings of society to enable them to understand and change it; in this system education is a process of understanding the world, of acquiring the skills and confidence to investigate its workings for meaningful, life-rewarding living.

For all practical purposes, the application of the principles of traditional education to the educational system that currently prevails in African countries would mean setting up a new kind of educational system that would satisfy the yearnings of Africans to be educated and achieve self-actualization through knowledge acquisition, seeing in knowledge the act of existence. The new system should be free of compulsory attendance and stipulated years of graduation, as well as from a rigidly structured curriculum. Every learning institute should prepare the recipients for lifelong education and therefore open up the door for the acquisition of both theoretical/technological and speculative/intellectual knowledge. Thus, to divide or classify institutions of learning into technical, secondary, polytechnics, universities of technology, and academic universities is a waste of resources and an abrogation of the principle of social justice. For example, if the present system of education provides for introductory technology with technology workshops here and there, it would not be necessary to have such other structures as “technical colleges.” Also, if the present-day universities teach agricultural engineering, medicine, management, etc., there is no need to establish universities of agriculture or technology, as is currently the case, say, in Nigeria. For African nations to survive educationally in the present century, they should now start to operate a totally comprehensive educational system—comprehensive both in policy and in structure, for all educable children. It is hoped that in the course of the century, stakeholders in education in Africa will transform the present educational institutions, which indoctrinate, alienate, and manipulate people and knowledge into knowledge and skills acquisition centers, into institutions where children, adolescents, and adults can acquire the knowledge and skills they need to engage in profitable occupations of their choice. When this happens, the main objectives of education in Africa—free and democratic societies; just and egalitarian societies; united, strong, and self-reliant nations; great, dynamic economies; and lands of bright and full opportunities for all citizens—will have been achieved (Republic of Botswana, 1977; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981; Republic of Zambia, 1996a; Magubane, 1999).

7. LIMITED ACCESS TO SCHOOL EDUCATION

It is clear from the current literature on educational development that access to school education in most countries in Africa is limited, because the population of children and adults who are ready for various levels of education is growing steadily, more so than the various educational institutions can manage. Thus, primary and secondary schools, as well as tertiary institutions, in most parts of Africa are no longer able to offer admission to all applicants. While most countries in Africa are able to offer admission to up to 90% of

children of school-going age, very few countries are able to absorb up to 75% of the graduates of primary schools into junior secondary schools (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981; Republic of Botswana, 1994; Republic of Zambia, 1992). The access problem becomes more serious at senior secondary schools and tertiary institutions. While some countries in Africa have almost 100% transition from junior to senior secondary schools (e.g., Botswana), others can only provide between 50% and 60% transition. The proportion of senior secondary school graduates transiting to universities or other categories of tertiary institutions is even smaller, ranging between 10% and 40% (Republic of Botswana, 1993, 1994; Republic of Zambia, 1996b).

8. ALTERNATIVES TO FORMAL SCHOOLING

The latter half of the twentieth century and the initial years of the twenty-first century have witnessed the rapid emergence of alternatives to the formal school system all over the world. Examples of these are the development of distance education programs and the establishment of open universities at many tertiary institutions worldwide. Examples are the Centres for Distance Education at the Universities of Botswana, Ibadan (in Nigeria) and Swaziland (UB Calendar, 2003–2004; UI Calendar, 2003–2004; UNZA Calendar, 2003–2004). By far, the most prominent alternative to the formal school system is the Open University system. Examples are the Open University in the United Kingdom, with its headquarters in Milton Keynes, and the National Open University in Nigeria, with its headquarters in Abuja. The common aim of these institutions is to widen the access to education of many citizens of the global village who do not have the opportunity to attend conventional institutions. Several universities in Africa (e.g., the University of South Africa and Vista University) and the United Kingdom (e.g., the University of London and the University of Oxford) have developed academic and professional programs that have the potential to widen the access to education and training of prospective academics and professionals in the global village. The emphasis of these institutions should be on training the citizens of the global village in the use of the products of science and technology (e.g., the Internet) and on preparing the teachers of tomorrow.

9. TRAINING THE TEACHERS OF TOMORROW

Nigeria provides an example of the variety of teacher training institutions in Africa. There are five types of program of varying duration, which lead to B.A. (Ed.), B.Sc. (Ed.) and B.Ed. degrees (Adeyinka, 2003). These are:

1. *Regular or full-time program*: This is the most common program run at the universities. It is fully funded by federal and state governments. For direct entry students (i.e., those whose entry qualifications are Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) or General Certificate of Education (GCE) [A-Level]), the normal duration is 3 years for courses in the arts (including languages), sciences, and social sciences. For these courses, Joint Matriculation Examination (JME) candidates spend an additional year, since they have to begin at the 100-level. Courses in agriculture, engineering, medicine, and pharmacy last for 4 or 5 years for direct entry students, while JME students spend an additional year.
2. *Part-time program*: This involves weekend lectures in courses similar to the ones described above, except that integrated subjects, such as social studies and integrated science, are available. Primary and lower secondary school teachers are usually encouraged to take the latter. The program, which is designed to serve teachers, is popular with some university institutes and faculties of education. It is run on weekends (i.e., Friday evenings through Saturdays). The duration of studies is usually about 2 years longer than that of the regular programs.
3. *Sandwich program*: This program involves the organization of lectures for serving teachers and educational administrators during mid-semester breaks and long vacations. As in the case of the part-time program, courses are available in the arts, sciences, and social sciences, as well as in languages and integrated subjects as described earlier. The University of Ilorin, Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for example, run sandwich programs. The period of study is about the same as that for the part-time program.
4. *Correspondence and open studies program*: This is similar to the part-time and sandwich programs because it is run for serving teachers. But it lasts about 2 years longer than the part-time/sandwich programs. The most popular university running this type of program is the University of Lagos (UNILAG). Its Correspondence and Open Studies Institute (COSIT) is charged with organizing and coordinating the program nationwide. The COSIT program combines the features of the part-time and sandwich programs: students attend weekend lectures at COSIT centers nearest to their schools or education offices; long vacations are used for intensive, round-up lectures and end-of-session examinations.
5. *External studies program*: This is the Ibadan version of the UNILAG COSIT program. It has the features of part-time and sandwich programs: weekend lectures and teaching practice near students' places of residence/work and long vacation convergence at the University of Ibadan. The major advantage of programs 2–5 described above is that they provide students with the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone: the

opportunity to prepare for university degrees while retaining full-time jobs. In this way, the universities assist the country in developing its workforce through the in-service training and upgrading of teachers. As nonregular students have to take the same or similar courses as their regular counterparts (including projects and teaching practice), they have the opportunity to develop their academic and professional competence and live up to the ideals contained or implicit in the objectives of teacher education in the National Policy on Education (Adeyinka, 2004: 79).

Like the universities, the colleges of education also run full-time, part-time, sandwich, and distance education/correspondence programs, all leading to the award of the NCE. In addition, there are now five categories of College of Education/NCE programs in the country, namely:

1. State colleges of education, offering courses in a variety of arts, science, and social science subjects, in addition to basic courses in education, general English, and teaching practice.
2. Federal colleges of education, normal NCE colleges, similar in structure and curricular offerings to the state colleges of education. They are normally expected to be better staffed and better equipped, with the teachers enjoying better salaries and more attractive conditions of service than their counterparts in the state colleges. Examples are the Federal Colleges of Education at Abeokuta, Kontagora, Okene, and Pankshin.
3. Federal colleges of education (special), such as the one at Oyo, in Oyo State, providing courses in special education for able and handicapped students. One important feature of this type of college is the teaching and learning of sign languages, which enable deaf and dumb students to communicate with their hearing counterparts. In this way, the equality of educational opportunity component of the National Policy on Education is implemented.
4. Federal colleges of education (technical), offering specialized vocational and technical courses for would-be professionals in these areas. The eight colleges in this group are located in Akoka (Lagos), Asaba, Bichi, Gombe, Gusau, Omoku, Potiskum, and Umuze.
5. National Teachers' Institute (NTI) Distance Education Programme, providing distance/correspondence education for serving teachers at various centers all over the country, in a far more aggressive way than the universities.

The NCE programs in Nigerian colleges of education are similar to the preuniversity teacher training programs in Botswana. In Botswana, there are two colleges of education for training prospective junior secondary school teachers. These are Molepolole College of Education (MCE) and Tonota College of Education (TCE). Additionally, there are four colleges of education for the training of prospective primary school teachers, namely Francistown College of Education (FCE), Lobatse College of Education (LCE), Serowe College of Education (SCE), and Tlokweng College of

Education (TkCE). All these run regular programs and are attached to the University of Botswana. Prospective senior secondary school teachers are trained in the Faculty of Education, University of Botswana. Part of the efforts of the University of Botswana to widen access to teacher training programs is the establishment of the Centre for Continuing Education, which runs programs similar to the ones in some universities and colleges of education in Nigeria. In both countries, the number of applicants for admission to the teacher education programs has consistently exceeded the places available (Adeyinka, 1998, 1999).

The open universities and distance education centers in various corners of the global village could design teacher training programs that would accommodate all the elements described in teacher education types 1–4 above, with various categories of professional teachers enrolling for the program best suited to their professional duties. All prospective teachers in the future should have access to training for teaching. Likewise, all prospective university teachers should receive training in teaching, for the good teacher is the one who knows what to teach and how to teach it: a combination of content and pedagogy.

10. ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL AND THE NEW EXAMINATION SYSTEM

As indicated earlier in this chapter, a large number of secondary-school-age children do not have access to secondary education. Part of the national and institutional policies on education for tomorrow should include a policy for general access to secondary education for all citizens of the global village who are capable of benefiting from such education. In line with the current penchant for the semesterization of courses and examinations in universities across the globe, we recommend that the present policy of having students study eight courses in 2 years and sitting for examinations at the end of 2 years should be discontinued and replaced by a new examination system such that students would study four subjects for 1 year and sit the GCE (O-Level) Examination, or its local equivalents, at the end of Form 4. Also in Form 5, they should study and be examined in four subjects. A combination of their results would qualify them for university admission, to which most of them should be given access, either in conventional institutions or in open universities or centers for distance education.

11. FUTURE POLICY THRUSTS

According to the *Collins English Dictionary* (1998), “policy” refers to “a plan of action adopted or pursued by an individual, government, party,

business, etc.” With reference to education, a policy is the strategy designed to put into practice the principles, theories, or ideologies relating to education, as adopted by a nation, state, or local community. It also refers to the process or act of putting theory into practice. Policy-makers include, or should include, all stakeholders in education: government/Ministry of Education officials, heads of institutions, NGOs, the learners and their parents. The future of education or the education of the future in Africa should be based on the actualization of the principles of education that were discussed earlier in this chapter, as well as on the determination of the content and methods of instruction that will make all types and levels of education accessible to all citizens of Africa, as part of the global village. According to Chunman (2002: 3),

education should serve to forge abilities. Future education policies should focus on eliminating evil and promoting benevolence, promoting original human nature and discarding the negative aspects of the human mind. Education should impart knowledge and expound mysteries. . . . It also ought to care for living beings, understand cosmic timing, follow human moralities, cherish virtue and do good, understand science, treasure civilisation and conduct oneself as a decent person with rationality and a clear mind, in an upright and noble manner.

This is more than the formal school can give. Therefore, the learner of the future should not depend on the formal school for all his or her education. Rather, he or she should learn from his or her physical, social, and spiritual environments, as in the traditional African society. Furthermore, Chunman’s statement implies that all the principles of education in the traditional African society—preparationism, functionalism, communalism, perennialism, and holisticism—should be embraced and built into the process of education in the future, a synthesis of what the school and the wider society can give to the individuals or citizens of the global village. Other areas to which education policy of the future should direct itself include the following:

1. General access to all types and levels of education.
2. Subsidizing education to enable all individuals and social groups participate in global education.
3. Integration of technology with Africa’s school curricula.
4. Integration of appropriate elements of ATE in the Western type of education that has been widely embraced in Africa.
5. Integration of education into production, especially in urban centers.
6. Integration of school education into agricultural practice in rural areas.
7. Synthesis of school education and African cultural beliefs and practices.
8. Education for self-help and self-employment, as an alternative to the system of education for “white-collar” jobs.
9. Flexibility in the secondary school examinations system, so as to take into account our earlier recommendation that the university semesterization

system be extended to secondary school in a modified form, such that students would no longer have to study many subjects for two or more years.

10. Decentralization of power, authority, and control in the educational delivery process.

Among the policy areas listed above, we would like to focus on the future of technology in education as one major area of development to which future policy on education should be directed. In the developed countries, such as those in Western Europe and North America, one of the specific aims of education is to initiate youths into a new world of science and technology through daily contact with and use of products of these disciplines. Western countries have passed through the age of discovery and inventions. What education aims at achieving now appears to be the preparation of youths for the utilization and preservation of the existing products of science and technology; the understanding, handling, and enjoyment of the fruits of their predecessors' labors. If you want X, press Y (where X could mean a variety of human needs, ranging from information on how to operate a complex machine, boot the computer or access the Internet, use a vending machine to obtain snacks, tea, coffee, or soft drinks; and Y for the specific button to press in each case). This seems to be the type of orientation youths are now exposed to in developed countries, such as Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In other words, a primary aim of education in developed countries is to make the youth computer-literate and relate this knowledge to whatever else they do (Adeyinka, 1998: 7). The following quotation captures the whole picture of the place of technology in the education of the future:

Education will be really improved through technology. In the future, students will have many different options for their education. Students will be able to take online correspondence courses from home, with real-time video and multimedia over high-speed Internet connections. This means that a student could be anywhere where there is an Internet connection, including on the road or on the beach with wireless Internet, and still make it to class . . .

The Internet will be a major resource for students and teachers alike. Students will be able to contact professors and workers in the field, and get almost immediate replies. Entire classrooms will be able to watch live real-life experiences, such as archaeologists at a dig site, or astronauts in space; and interact with them.

Teleconferences will be a large part of future education. Technology will allow individuals to attend class from home, with full video and audio link-ups. Also, entire classrooms will link-up together, sharing presentations and doing research together; even if they're thousands of miles apart . . .

Computers will be in every classroom. Not just one for the whole class, but one per student. Each student and teacher will have either a desktop computer or a laptop computer, which will all be connected together to the Internet There will be computer software for most courses, eliminating the need for thousands of books. (Norton, 1999)

12. CONCLUSION

Regarding the warm reception of Western education and culture in Africa, it could be argued that there is nothing wrong in accepting certain aspects of the cultures of foreign nations and imitating the ways of life of other societies. Nor is there anything wrong with adopting useful aspects of the educational system of the Western world, but the school system must be comprehensive and adapted to the needs, aspirations, and occupational expectations of the local beneficiaries of the adopted or adapted system. In other words, foreign cultures should not be accepted en bloc, without modifying and relating these to the existing social, economic, and political systems. In the developing countries of Africa, what is needed most is a careful examination of the various aspects of the foreign cultures with a view to accepting those aspects that could lead to further development in African countries, that is, that could be synthesized with the local culture to produce a new, refined culture that could lead to more functional education (since education involves the passing on of a society's culture from one generation to the next), wider access to schooling, better and more effective social, economic, and political organization, and a better life for all. In the case of education, for example, whatever is good in the Western educational system could be accepted and incorporated into the existing pattern, content, and methods of traditional education in Africa, with considerable emphasis on universal access to schooling and preparation for self-employment and, where necessary, service to the state.

It is with regard to adaptation and the handling of the education process that Ivan Illich's philosophy is most relevant to the African situation. Illich's main thesis is that the school has failed as an agency of education because it has succeeded in dividing society into two distinct classes: the so-called educated and the uneducated; corresponding to the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the privileged and the unprivileged. These divisions exist because access to formal education and training is limited at all levels of formal education in Africa. Future policy on education in Africa should guarantee a widening of access to education so that Africans, as their counterparts in the global village, can develop their intellect to the full, benefit from scientific and technological developments, and contribute their own share to that development. One way of guaranteeing unlimited

access to knowledge is for all policy-makers in education and training to intensify the process of teaching and learning through distance learning and Open University systems and the provision of access to Internet for all citizens able and willing to use the facility.

Finally, as we suggested above, all university teachers of the future should combine content with pedagogy: they all should be exposed to the philosophy and practice of teaching and learning since a good teacher is one who knows not only what to teach but also how to teach it.

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WIDENING ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: FUTURE RESEARCH THRUSTS

Akpovire Oduaran

1. INTRODUCTION

One major objective of this book was to portray achievements in widening access to education and the consequent challenges in the era of globalization. Whether it be social, economic, or political, globalization has a way of making its influence felt. It is because we suspected that globalization may have far-reaching effects on the widening of access to education in the North and the South that we framed the discussions in the book as we did. It is hoped that this approach will yield some insights that will inform the thrust of research over the next 5 or 6 years in different parts of the world. Much of what is presented in the present chapter therefore draws on reflections on initiatives in selected countries for widening access to education, particularly the possible research gaps that need to be filled in order to broaden and deepen our understanding of the central phenomena. The thrust of research into the issues of widening access to education is situated in the context of globalization.

2. EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN A GLOBALIZING ERA

As an economic phenomenon, globalization is largely driven by research and innovations as corporations engage in the race to gain the competitive edge, and thus to be efficient, productive, and profitable with specific reference to the economies of scale. If producers are to garner a good share of profits from the expanded marketplace aimed at under the sway of globalization, they must engage in market-driven research. As a consequence, it is likely that much of research in this era will be different from what was common several decades ago. As opposed to the dominance of local needs,

interests, and problems, which guided research in the past, research under the sway of globalization places primary emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness, competitiveness, and profitability. Thus, anything in education that will not enhance the competitiveness and comparative advantage of the multinational and/or transnational corporations is unlikely to attract much attention. In light of this, one may suspect that researching the widening of access to education as social justice would run contrary to the goals and focus of globalization. Indeed, a review of the preceding chapters of this book would reveal that little attention has been paid to the performance of widening access initiatives in the midst of the ever-wider pursuit of globalization and even internationalism in the early years of the twenty-first century.

3. THE THRUST OF CURRENT RESEARCH INTO WIDENING ACCESS

A survey of the literature and documents indicates that the most common themes in the research into widening access relate to the investigation of why it has become so difficult to widen access, even as more and more efforts in that direction seem to be made. The main issues that dominate the research in this area have had to do with the contexts in which widening access is being pursued; indeed, it appears that in contexts where national ideologies, philosophies, or objectives emphasize equality, equity, and liberal democracy, the tendency is to move towards cultivating favorable provision of access—as is the case, for example, in Botswana, Nigeria, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. While there may be qualitative differences between such provisions, they still contribute to the expansion of access, which cannot be said of contexts in which restrictions are placed on access in accordance with religious principles or teachings, as was the case, for example, under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

Contextual variations in the widening of access, participation, and achievement may even have their origins in differences in political priorities. If the priority of the dominant political party in a given country is not to widen access to education, it might be difficult for one to find equitable widening of access. If, for example, the administration in North Korea believes more in arming itself against external foes, it might want to spend more in the area of military technology than in widening access to education. If, on the other hand, a nation decides to make it a priority to protect its citizens from potential terror attacks, as is the case with George W. Bush's administration in the United States, it may invest even more in military technology and warfare than in widening access, participation, and achievement. But these ideas could be assumptions that may provide good basis for research into the challenges facing the widening of access in different countries.

The literature has also shown interest in widening access and participation with respect to social class, age, gender, digital capabilities, geographical location, religion, impact, etc. For example, Barraket (2001: 25–31), Bidwell and Petry (2001: 42–51), and Broumley and Weedon (2001: 52–59) have contributed ideas to the debate on the true use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the widening of access, participation, and achievement. Nevertheless, there is still not enough evidence on how much impact ICTs have had on the transformations that have occurred in the pursuit of widening access, participation, and achievement. Again, Osborne (2003a: 5–24 and 2003b: 43–58) has drawn attention to the need to adopt a comparative approach to the study of widening access and participation within and across continents that would help us in determining the relative effectiveness in addressing the challenge of widening access and participation in different parts of the world.

One area that has not attracted much research attention but that promises to be of considerable importance is that of mature age entry into the learning systems across the globe. This interest, at the very least, lies in the fact that we cannot really talk about widening access if certain segments of society are denied access because of their age. In this respect the research of Mpofo (2001: 59–73) and Carrillo and Aguilera (2001: 66–72) is of particular interest. For example, Mpofo's research (2001: 70) has shown the need for African governments to give serious consideration to introducing fee waiver schemes for part-time students so as to target the resources of those who would otherwise remain excluded from participating in higher education.

Some studies have investigated the restriction of women's access in ICTs even though there are claims to the fact that everyone should have free access. Such studies have examined the patriarchal construction of technology and ICTs, and roundly denounced the largely gendered nature of a allegedly neutral realm, which has excluded women more often than it has included them. In particular, Blashki (2003: 20–31) has extended the debate on the discriminatory socialization processes in education and employment to the profound cultivation of structural and functional impediments to women's access to and participation in ICTs. Blashki (2003: 23) notes that Keisler et al. (1985: 451–462) have drawn attention to the male dominance of school computers even in preschool. Thus, when researchers take an interest in access in the context of widening access to education as social justice, they are likely to consider gender-discriminatory practices across the globe.

In this book, there has been some discussion of widening access as it relates to its conceptualization and applications across the globe. Research agendas portrayed in this book have focused on different countries and case studies that have stimulated the interest of writers in profound ways. Julia Preece (see Chapter 7), and Olutoyin Mejiuni and Oluyemisi Obilade (see Chapter 9), for example, have drawn attention to the subject of widening

access in the context of poverty. Similarly, Sabo Indabawa (see Chapter 23), Deborah Egunyomi (see Chapter 26), and Obilade and Mejiuni have drawn attention to widening access as it relates to women and girls.

Beyond these interests, the HIV/AIDS pandemic that is ravaging Africa, Asia, and South America has enormous implications for the widening of access to education as social justice. The pandemic has drawn funding and the sense of urgency away from initiatives to widen access to education. The idea is that only the living can actually discuss and participate in the benefits that accrue to those who have access to education. It is in this context Fasokun's discussion took up HIV/AIDS as a depleting factor in widening access (see Chapter 8).

4. FUTURE RESEARCH THRUSTS

If we are to judge by the research interests and agendas in the recent literature, we can identify several thrusts of future research.

4.1 General research focus

First, it should be noted that beyond the normal advocacy in which each country seems to be engaged, the scope of research continues to be somewhat limited. Perhaps researchers should examine the contributions made to higher education globally by access courses to widening access. Research along these lines is already underway in the United Kingdom, but other countries need to evaluate through systematic research innovative practices that have been in effect for quite some time now in other parts of the world. For example, it might be rewarding to know how much the Open University as a format for widening access, has contributed to widening access, participation, and achievements in learning programs in the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Nigeria, to mention but a few.

A related issue is that of government patronage of and support for access courses across the world. Is it not possible that there are governments that merely pay lip-service to the whole idea of widening access instead of actually investing national resources to achieve that idea? Here, too, research could zero in on the relative use of access courses by learners in the North and the South.

Even though it may seem that there is global public acknowledgment of the importance of widening access, it is still possible that certain segments of national populations continue to be excluded from education today. That is why it might be rewarding to examine the global distribution of children, youths, and adults who are still effectively excluded from education due to distance from the nearest educational establishments.

Open and distance learning institutions currently abound in several countries. Most of the time the providers of this mode of learning claim, wrongly or rightly, that they are major contributors to the widening of access. It might be necessary here to engage in research that examines the relative effectiveness of the use of open and distance learning in widening access to education globally.

The pursuit of widening access has attracted the advocacy input of several organizations. Not much has been said about which organization is doing what and what is the level of effectiveness of each. Thus, it might be worthwhile to focus research interests on the organizations that are actively engaged in advocacy for access and inquire into how successful their efforts have been globally. It might be necessary to research the advocacy strategies that have worked or failed. Once it has been determined which strategies have worked, the next step would be to consider how they might be strengthened and applied to different contexts.

Furthermore, research needs to evaluate the respective impact of the information society, globalization, internationalization, and science and technology on widening access.

The issue of balance in widening access and participation for children, youths, and adults is worthy of research attention, just as is the issue of motivation. It would be important to explore the level of motivation for widening access, participation, and achievement that exists in different countries in the North and the South.

A large number of university continuing education schemes are in operation today. One question for research in this area might be whether or not there has been an increase or a decrease of university continuing education as a strategy for widening access in comparison to mainstream undergraduate education throughout the world (Osborne, 2003: 5–24).

Systems of governance could also impact on the issue of widening access to education as social justice. It might be fruitful to research the widening of access to and participation in learning under different systems of government.

There has been a great deal of debate over whether access is tantamount to empowerment or total incorporation. Research would be needed to determine the divergences of the impact of access in the pursuit of empowerment and social inclusion.

4.2 Specific research thrusts

Among specific research issues, research into access under the different economic, political, and social systems would be very instructive.

In the political realm, it might be interesting to know how different political parties respond to access. Equally interesting could be the explo-

ration of how feelings of political injustice among minorities may affect access. Access can only operate under conditions of peace. So how do political violence and unrest affect access in the different parts of the world?

Research could be conducted to explore whether equity and social cohesion are political goals that are pursued as they relate to access. Some of these seemingly wide-ranging issues may be difficult to pinpoint sufficiently for research, but they affect access provision all the same.

In the realm of social systems, the issues of gender, ethnic violence, ideological underpinnings, and social deprivation in different countries would be challenging research themes. Though they may prove to be intractable, they nevertheless affect access globally.

Of equally grave importance is the relationship between economies/economic systems and access. Regardless of how many access schemes might be possible, it might be interesting to examine through research the various market-induced and non-market-induced access schemes in the world. In particular, it is necessary to determine which of the two is more sustainable, and why.

In the economic realm, research is needed to determine the effects of the continuous reductions in education funding over the last 10 years in all the countries covered in this book. Research may be needed here to indicate which countries are experiencing declining investment per learner, and why. Research may be needed to indicate the extent to which education is affordable to learners from high-income, medium-income, and low-income brackets.

Research also needs to focus on countries that may be experiencing a decline in support for educational infrastructures and maintenance, and why. What can be done if, indeed, there is a decline? From the literature it appears that different countries treat the widening of access differently. It might be necessary to explore the global incidences of deliberate and directed funding of education and the possible impact of each.

Equally interesting could be the question of how nations make choices concerning funding, quality, and management of access to education.

Globalization and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans have differently and separately impacted on access. Therefore, research may be needed to examine the effects of increases in fees on participation by different social classes, groups, or nations. When, for example, in the United Kingdom the Labour Government decided to increase fees in its tertiary institutions, learners from the Third World took special interest in that development. It could be that under globalization, the actions of different nation-states could generate reactions in others. Why is this the case, and how does that affect global access concerns?

The United Kingdom has several access initiatives in the workplace. Research could explore the relative success of those work-based access initiatives.

Overall research may be needed concerning issues of the digital divide between the North and the South as they affect access. Likewise, research may be needed in the area of costs, infrastructures, and regional differences in access achievements between the North and the South. What are the obstacles to widening access in the North and the South? How can the obstacles be mitigated?

Above all, we need to initiate and pursue to their logical conclusions different access projects globally. It is these issues that we shall briefly address in the next section.

5. ACCESS PROJECTS

Studying the widening of access to education in the North and the South has had the added advantage of identifying possible programs and projects that might help to remove impediments to the achievement of access and participation. We have drawn attention to the growing inadequacies that relate to much more plausible achievement of access. We would observe, however, that where there is visible political will and/or resources, the inadequacies cannot remain insurmountable.

Among the projects that might enhance the global promotion of access would be the establishment of a genuinely international journal of access. This journal should reflect the interest, issues, and challenges related to widening access to education in the North and the South. The composition of the editorial board of such a journal should be strictly international, just as the contents should reflect development in access in the North and the South. The proposed journal should be cheaply produced so as to be affordable to all who are interested in access issues across the globe. Moreover, the journal would have to be electronic at a later stage and made available in all libraries and to policy-makers everywhere.

It might also be rewarding to inaugurate, based on the initial effort represented by this book, an international access-monitoring group. Such a group would have to reflect the wide range of access practitioners and advocates in the North and the South. For the prompt delivery of its international services, the monitoring group would need to have links to UNESCO and similar multilateral and bilateral organizations that have been interested in widening access to education.

A third and final project that should be put in place is the establishment of an international research team to investigate the widening of access to education in the North and the South. The team would be selected using the criterion of proven interest in and research into access issues over the last 10 years. It should also be based on regional considerations and must reflect all parts of the globe. Among the items the

research team should cover would be access policies and implementations of policy with an eye on quality and quantity, financial outlay, and human resource issues.

6. CONCLUSION

Researching the widening of access to education as social justice in the era of globalization can prove problematic and challenging. It is problematic because there may be some who hold on strongly to the view that, since globalization entails competitiveness, the question of widening access could be contradictory. It is also challenging because those who advocate the widening of access to education must find their way out of the maze of justifying their concern as something that does not contradict globalization. Pursuing the research thrusts outlined above would help to overcome the seeming conflict between globalization and widening access.

We have sought in this chapter to identify central research themes and gaps that have emerged thus far in the literature. In doing so, it has been possible to articulate—albeit somewhat summarily—what further research still needs to be done to strengthen advocacy for access, participation, and achievement in the North and the South. Furthermore, as a result of the foregoing survey, it has been possible to suggest some global access projects that interested agencies may want to support. Should that happen, such projects could become new beacons of hope for those who have continuously invested their energies in the widening of access across the globe, hope that should carry research into new frontiers.

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