

COMMITTEE IV  
Modernization, Appropriate  
Values and Education

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COMMENTS ON TESHOME WAGAW'S PAPER  
ON 'EDUCATIONAL DETERMINANTS  
OF MODERNIZATION: PROBLEMS  
OF SKILL FORMATION'

by

Adonis F. Labor  
Senior Lecturer  
Department of Education  
Fourah Bay College  
Univeristy of Sierra Leone  
Freetown, Sierra Leone

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## Introduction

Prof Wagaw of the University of Michigan has to be congratulated for his lucid and penetrating paper on "Educational Determinants of Modernization: Problems of Skill Formation." No doubt, much research must have been done, and time expended to produce such a frank expose on the systems of education that operated in Africa over the last several decades; the indicators of modernization as he sees<sup>S</sup> them, the conflict of values in skill formation, and highlighting recent attempts to <sup>reform</sup> ~~form~~ the curriculum by the inclusion of technical and vocational courses at the primary and secondary school levels.

## Modernization or Development

I begin by making brief reference to <sup>the</sup> term "modernization". Like De. Beatrice Avolos, I will argue strongly against the universalisation of the concepts of 'modernization' and 'education for modernization' because of <sup>the</sup> possible connotation that Third World Countries follow the path of highly industrialized countries to the neglect of reforming their own educational systems to the economic, social, and cultural situations prevailing in their countries.<sup>1</sup> Not all Third World countries want to be modern in that sense.

Since the seventies, African states have strived not for education for "frustration" but for education for "production<sup>ve</sup>" work", thus preserving cultural identity, with the expected outcome that school leavers at various levels of education will

be gainfully employed and so contribute toward national development.

In this context, therefore, I will defend the notion of 'national development' and 'education for national development' rather than 'modernization' and 'education for modernization'. Education for national development should in this sense be understood to mean education which contributes to the social and economic development of one's country.

Admittedly, Third World Countries are at different stages in their development process. Development may be short-term yielding immediate returns or may be of long-term nature. For a particular nation, the intended development may belong to sectors such as education, health or agriculture, or <sup>may</sup>~~any~~ even cut across sectors.

Although some development activities may be common to Third World Countries, others may differ from country to country. Furthermore, needs when fulfilled in one area may even generate development activities in other areas. Consequently, development activities must be functional in that they should prove useful to different countries for different purposes.

The fore-going shows how 'modern' my thinking is about modernization and the role of education.

#### The Equation of Modernization and Development

Based on the fore-going thesis, it may be erroneous to equate modernization and development. In most western minds and

possibly for the elites in the Third World Countries, development equals modernization and modernization equals the triumph of western materialism - mass production, the mechanization and chemicalization of agriculture, excessive consumerist lifestyles, the endless pursuit of economic growth, even at the expense of the ecological and environmental management and conservation.<sup>2</sup>

This was the dominant development model up to the end of the UN First Development Decade (1970). This is mal-development, a lopsided, distorted and inequitable pattern of development. Development nowadays is the selective attack on the worst forms of poverty and human misery, and development goals are defined in terms of the progressive reduction and eventual elimination of malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, inequality and injustice.

#### Education is Learning not Schooling

Prof. Wagaw's definition of education (page 3) in terms of the acquisition of knowledge (cognitive), attitudes (affective) and skill (psycho-motory) can hardly be dismissed. One might add that education is not only schooling, quantified by years of classroom exposure and the number of certificates, diplomas and degree which one collects. We equate education with learning regardless of where, when or how it takes place.

Apart from formal education, a dichotomy which seems to pervade Dr. Wagaw's paper, this is also non-formal education which has gained currency among educational development planners and analysts since the late 1960s, thanks to the monumental

study of Philip Coombs - "the World Educational Crisis"<sup>3</sup>. It is relevant here to give the definition by Coombs et al of non-formal education which is <sup>now</sup> ~~not~~ generally accepted. "Any organised educational activity outside the established formal system - whether separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable clientele and learning objectives".<sup>4</sup> Non-formal education is not a separate 'system' of education in the same sense as formal education is a system with its distinct structure, interlocking parts and internal coherence. It is merely an umbrella term for the great variety of out-of-school programmes provided for adults (illiterates and neo-literates alike), but also for school-age leftouts and dropouts from school.

### Education Systems in Africa Over Last Few Decades

#### Indigenous Education

Prof. Wagaw's analyses of the various educational systems which were in operation in pre-Colonial, Colonial and post-Colonial Africa - indigenous, Afro-Christian, Afro-Islam, Afro-European and Afro-Modern are most welcome.

With regard to the indigenous educational systems, it should never be forgotten that in pre-colonial Africa, non-formal education structures, like puberty rites, religious and secret ceremonies, apprenticeships, were well-established. At the age of puberty, for example, the initiation ceremony is a set of age-worn ritual practices through which the young of the same age groups are taught by trained instructors not only the beha-

viour patterns, techniques and institutions of the adult world, but also its sacred myths and traditions. The initiates, variously called "neophytes", "educatees" are impressed upon that the newly-acquired knowledge is just the beginning, that learning is life-long, that it has no fixed "venues" such as classrooms or the laboratory, and that learning is by "living and doing".<sup>5</sup>

President Kenyatta has provided fascinating and almost nostalgic insights into the "indigenous educational" system of the East African Gikuyu society before the arrival of the Western colonial missionaries and evangelists with their modern schools.<sup>6</sup>

Many of these indigenous non-formal educational structures, though scarcely visible to the naked eye of the western-reared educators, are still very much alive and are performing important socialising and economic functions.

One cannot but agree then with President Nyerere's description of the purpose of education as "to transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society, and to prepare the young for their membership of society and their active participation in its maintenance and development"<sup>7</sup>

#### Afro-European Education

With respect to the Afro-European model, I agree with Prof. Wagaw (pages 11 & 12 ) that the educational structures in colonial Africa were inadequate, were unsuited to Africa's socio-economic

realities and were predicated more on the cognitive aspects of learning than on the acquisition of skills and attitudes that were development-specific. The litany of criticisms of the formal school education model transported into colonial Africa is too familiar - schools teach largely irrelevant materials to the young, and irrelevant to the real needs of the Third World. But perhaps the most damaging criticisms are that schools are dysfunctional to development efforts, are inadequate, are too expensive and are, like most imports, capital intensive. They are elitist and play interrelated roles in polarising society and perpetuating the configurations of power and ~~privilege.~~ <sup>privilege.</sup>

Afro-Modern Education (The UNESCO - Sponsored Regional Conference in 1961 and 1962)

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Third World Countries were lead to believe that it was the rapid and unfettered expansion of formal education opportunities in response to the explosive demand which held the key to social change and national development. "The developing nations were prompt to act on evidence put forward by various recent studies, without a realistic appraisal of the possible returns on such investment in the context of their specific situations which differed greatly from those of developed nations".<sup>8</sup> And so, nearly every developing country committed itself to the goal of universal primary ~~educa-~~ <sup>CA-</sup>tion - a difficult, politically sensitive, but all too often an economically costly undertaking.

Following the deliberations and recommendations of the

historic UNESCO - sponsored regional conference in 1961 and 1962, the 1960s became a decade of exponential growth of educational provisions aimed at individual and social development. In the 15 years from 1950 to 1965, world wide enrol<sup>e</sup>ments roughly doubled - a truly remarkable accomplishment. Consequently, the 1970s became a decade of disenchantment with education's potential to achieve the expected goals of socio-economic development. The 1970s, under the influence of "stagflation", witnessed a headlong retreat from commitments to educational expansion while formal education entered a state of crisis of finance and of *raison d'etre*.<sup>9</sup> The crisis remains very much a live issue even today - ever-increasing demand for education, acute resource scarcities, rising costs and the serious problem of the educated unemployed. This crisis has inundated and is still inundating educational systems the world over.

Education seem to have become a growing despair of millions of youth across Africa. Lots of people who have been educated cannot get the jobs they desire because there are no jobs available or more importantly their education has not equipped them with the necessary skills and attitudes to make them employable. It is the responsibility of the educational system to offer the means of personal fulfilment to the young people of the nation, and to satisfy the nation's demand for a wide range of skilled, developmental oriented manpower.

### The Relevance of the Curriculum and the Need for Attitude Learning

In response to the question of relevance of the curriculum



in most African schools to the realities of living in general, and to rural life in particular, many African countries have introduced practical subjects, particularly agriculture and allied sciences, in their curriculum. Others, notably Sierra Leone and Tanzania, have even gone further and are experimenting with an entirely new, more rural, community-oriented type of primary schooling. These community schools and community education centres, as they are called, are intended to be self-sufficient rural schools that are closely linked with their communities, ~~to~~ make maximum use of resources in the local community enabling skilled experienced local people to contribute to teaching and learning, and so bring schooling and traditional life into a co-operative mutually beneficial relationship: A recurrent theme is the view that education and production ought to be closely linked and that schools should be productive units - the welfare of the pupils depending in their output, just as the welfare of a farmer depends on the output of his farm<sup>10</sup>.

In the final analysis, the back to the <sup>soil</sup>~~land~~ call to 'educated' African youth, and the establishment of community schools and education centres can hardly solve the basic problem. For as long as opportunities exist for a tiny majority to pursue further or higher education, and as long as this is considered the main, <sup>if</sup>~~or~~ not the only avenue to top positions in society, those who are being herded into special community schools will feel themselves cheated and justifiably think their education a poor alternative. Again, as long as urban and peri-urban areas continue to enjoy amenities and facilities far advanced and far

excess of the rural areas, those being told to go back to the land will interpret that appeal quite rightly as an attempt to debar them from what should be rightfully theirs.

In the context of <sup>the</sup> foregoing analysis, there is pressing need, therefore, for attitude learning. Education for the right attitudes toward learning does not seem to receive much emphasis in current educational practices.

African primary schools can contribute immensely to the building and development of well-disciplined work force of its nation by generating in its children, during their formative years, desirable attitudes of <sup>a</sup> diverse nature. These attitudes should include those that engender loyalty to the school itself and foster appropriate sentiments which foster acceptance and internalization of its value. Furthermore, the training provided by the school should be work-oriented, and teach socio-cultural values while at the same time preparing the children for a vocation, including self-employment.<sup>11</sup>

Early attitude learning is a crucial training for developing countries, which can ultimately lead to the increase in their productive capacity and a reversion of the stereo-typed attitude towards manual work. Science education is the process by which a person develops abilities, skills, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive value in the society in which he lives, all subject matter should be designed in such a way as to promote these attitudes and develop these skills.<sup>12</sup>

The way in which a school as a social environment can stimulate attitude learning continues to occupy the minds of contemporary social scientists concerned with the problems of ~~forming~~ <sup>forming</sup> values and attitudes in the individual essential to the needs of <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ society to which he belongs.

For a school to have successful impact on the attitude of the child, it must have access to and control over him: it must be able to ~~motivate~~ <sup>motivate</sup> him to accept its value throughout the entire process of socialization. Success to use education to establish new behaviour patterns, beliefs, attitudes, values, that support ~~the~~ development process depends on the absence of complicating demands which might engender negative attitudes towards school and so cause premature withdrawal.

~~This~~ <sup>There</sup> is no doubt that factors external to the school/system also contribute toward premature withdrawal. Socio-economic status and educational background of the family, material possessions of the home, parental attitude toward school, parental perception of the values of school, health and nutritional problems, amongst others, all combine to contribute to the attitude toward continued education.

Premature withdrawal, because of its threat to economic development for Third World Countries, continues to dominate research attention.

In view of my concern for "education for modernization" which as I said earlier is to be understood as education for a better and more human living, educational authorities need to

re-examine some of its ritual activities to modify those which inherently cause failure and premature withdrawal and nurse those which are consistent with the need to achieve. We are clear on what academic values are, but our schools have to define in clear terms a course of instruction on desirable attitudes. This should be explicitly stated with its expected outcome, stated in precise terms which can be inferred from behaviour patterns of the learner.

Social <sup>scientists</sup> ~~scientist~~ claim that attitude learning comes through identification with a model. At home, the parents may be the child's model, at school his teacher or peer group. Consequently, to help the child develop desirable attitude, the teacher must provide exemplary models through teaching materials and aids, appealing enough to make the child identify with them and imbibe their values.

Co-operation between educational planners and curriculum developers, on the one hand, and economic planners, national development corporations, etc, on the other, is essential if there is to be progress in the attempt to work out, educational systems whose product will contribute to development.

### Conclusion

Let me, in closing <sup>offer a</sup> ~~after~~ <sup>remarks</sup> ~~remarks~~ on the need for the right type of education. Currently the school is at the threshold of establishing an identity amongst its nation. In this exercise, the school has come to realize that amongst the present needs and priority of our society, none is more urgent than the

need for the right type of education. This is precisely what Bagunya of Uganda means when he writes: "The goals and objectives of education can no longer be determined solely from its philosophical foundation. Indeed, the psychological, <sup>a</sup>anthropological, sociological, political and economic consideration all have equal claim in determining those goals and objectives." The need I mean is the type of education which nurtures and produces a citizenship capable of adjusting itself to its own environment. It is this type of education that can unlock the gate to progress and enable us to participate fully in the affairs of the nation. It is the type of education that will challenge us to examine own institutions, our cultural heritage, and make our own contribution to the totality of the institutional and cultural pattern of the nation.

While recognizing our association with the international community and our desire to play <sup>a</sup>role appropriate to that relationship and be adjusted to that community, we must strive to organize our systems and priorities so that due emphasis is given to the type of education that is relevant to our experience capable of adjusting us to our own environment. For more than anywhere it is in our own environment that we hope to live, move, and have our being.

Education in this context of social and economic development should be based on a combination of learning activities which may occur in schools, at home, in the market-place or elsewhere, in scheduled and unscheduled classes, or in any other development-oriented action programme.

This functional approach provides greater opportunity for reaching the disadvantage children through<sup>a</sup> variety of mediators in learning.

Lamentingly, there can be no development without corresponding responsibilities and problems to be challenged through commitment, sacrifice, dedication and, most importantly, involvement of the people for whom development is meant. Development must, therefore, come from within and not necessarily from without.

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