

A hand with a dark complexion is pointing towards the center of the page. The background is a dark chalkboard with faint white chalk drawings, including a large number '20' and some geometric shapes. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the hand and the text.

**CLIVE HARBER**

**SCHOOLING IN  
SUB-SAHARAN  
AFRICA**

**POLICY, PRACTICE AND PATTERNS**



# Schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa

Clive Harber

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Policy, Practice and Patterns

palgrave  
macmillan

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ISBN 978-3-319-57381-6      ISBN 978-3-319-57382-3 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-57382-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017940591

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The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*To Mary Harber who has shared my interest in Africa for over 40 years.*

## PREFACE

I have worked in the field of education and development for nearly 40 years and my key area of geographical interest has always been sub-Saharan Africa. As a result I have visited, done research in (and sometimes lived in) some 20 sub-Saharan African countries. I have therefore been aware for some time that there is a need for a single, readable overview book that analyses education, and more specifically schooling, in Africa in a thematic and comprehensive way to include all major aspects of educational debate. This book thus aims to provide a broad introduction to formal education in sub-Saharan Africa.

When I first became interested in education in Africa in 1977 it would be fair to say that published material was not thick on the ground. Thanks to the growth of higher education and research in Africa, and increased interest and funding outside Africa, this situation has changed drastically. There is now an abundance of published material on education in Africa covering a huge variety of topics so any selection of topics for this book has, to a certain extent, to be subjective. The book therefore considers a series of topics that seem, to the author at least, to be of particular importance and relevance to those interested in education in Africa. The approach of the book is to focus on the key educational ideas, processes, structures and issues of education in Africa with an emphasis on examining them in the light of published, research-based *evidence*. There are common patterns in educational provision across

sub-Saharan Africa and this book identifies them but also discusses differences between and within countries.

The book begins with the argument that in any education system it is important to understand what the key goals, intentions and policies are and to consider how they are made and where they come from. It is only against these that one can make judgements and evaluate educational practice. The book therefore starts by considering possible goals for education and the policies that are formulated as a result. It then goes on to examine the realities of education in Africa—the evidence on how it is actually practiced in schools and teacher education because, as has been argued,

‘The decade and a half since 1990 has at one level seen the growing homogenisation of educational discourse in sub-Saharan Africa. At another there also appears to be continued divergence from the discourse at the level of practice, although practice itself tends to show many convergencies’ (Chisholm and Leyendecker 2008: 196).

The chapters on educational practice start with what might be considered to be the key ‘inputs’ into the formal education system i.e. the basic elements required for an education system to exist and to start functioning—access by pupils to education, the teaching profession, teacher preparation and education and physical and financial resources. The book then turns to the content and processes of education—what actually goes on in schools and classrooms in terms of curriculum and assessment, teaching methods, language of instruction and school organisation and management. The next two chapters examine specific but important issues for education in Africa—violence in education and special educational needs and inclusion. Chapter 11 examines what might be considered the nub of the issue—what we know about the results of education in Africa, the outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and values and impact upon society, including both positive and negative impacts. This discussion also provides further insight into the general quality of education in Africa. The penultimate chapter returns to the issue of contextuality—while the book examines patterns of schooling across Africa, there can be significant differences between national contexts in terms of goals and priorities. The chapter therefore discusses three different priorities for schooling in three different national contexts: democracy in Namibia, national unity in Nigeria and self-reliance in Tanzania. The final chapter of the book brings together earlier discussions by summarising the patterns of schooling across sub-Saharan Africa identified in the

body of the book. While not having separate chapters of their own, gender, inequality, religion and the need for greater social justice are also important and explicit themes cutting across the content of many of the existing chapters.

As the book will argue, there have been both general socio-economic and political patterns affecting education in Africa as well as specific local, contextual factors. Some general, though not necessarily universal, patterns are existing pre-colonial/informal forms of education rooted in African culture, colonialism, independence, the influence of world religions such as Christianity and Islam, authoritarian government and transitions to democracy and the economic issues of World Bank initiated structural adjustment programmes involving cuts to public expenditure on education. In addition it is important to recognise that all sub-Saharan African countries are seen as ‘developing’ countries. While a controversial term (Harber 2014: Chap. 1), it is still one that is widely used. The UNDP’s annual Human Development Index ranks all countries in the world by what they regard as certain key indicators of development namely wealth, life expectancy and access to education. In the 2015 Human Development Index all sub-Saharan African countries were in the medium and low human development category with Botswana the highest at 106 out of 185 with 19 of the bottom twenty being in sub-Saharan Africa. (UNDP 2015).

As further discussed in this book, this ‘developing country’ context has implications for education in Africa in terms of access, quality and outcomes. For example, in 2015 UNESCO ranked 113 countries that had sufficient data in what they called the ‘Education For All Development Index’. The index was a composite of four data components—proportion of enrolment in primary education of the relevant school age population, the rate of adult literacy, the level of gender equality in terms access to primary and secondary education and adult literacy and the quality of education as measured by the proportion of pupils who survived school until grade 5. Despite considerable achievements in terms of these factors in some African countries over the last 15 years, the highest ranked country on mainland sub-Saharan Africa was Ghana at 89. Of the bottom 25 countries, 17 were in mainland sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO 2015: 233).

While all chapters of this book are concerned in some way with the relationships between education and the wider society, the present book is primarily concerned with discussing and analysing the ways in which

formal education is actually practiced in Africa in the light of the goals and policies that have been set for it. Theoretical explanations of the relationships between education and the ways in which societies do or don't develop economically, socially and politically (i.e. the how and why of education and development) are discussed in Chaps. 1 and 11 of this book in relation the goals and outcomes of education.

This book, then, focusses specifically on post-colonial, formal education at three broad levels—primary (including pre-primary), secondary and teacher education—while acknowledging the importance of other forms and levels of education in Africa. Higher education tends to have its own issues and literature and would have expanded the length and scope of the book to too great an extent. Other important forms and levels of education in Africa that influence contemporary formal education include pre-colonial, traditional (informal) education, colonial education and Islamic education. Traditional, informal education where the child learns skills and culture first hand by experience in the family and community (e.g. Omolewa 2007; Blakemore and Cooksey 1980: Chap. 1) continues both before and outside school. The child is not a 'tabula rasa' and brings with him or her to school from home certain knowledge, assumptions and beliefs about how the world operates that may fit with what is learned in school, clash with what is learned in school or be changed by what is learned in school. Islamic education preceded colonial education in a number of countries and many Moslem pupils may still now attend an Islamic school. However these can vary considerably from a school like a madrassa that may focus exclusively on Islamic teaching, to a school which may have a strong Islamic ethos but which has the full range of non-Islamic subjects as well. Moreover, some pupils may attend a formal school during the day and attend an Islamic school in the afternoon or at the weekend (Bray, Clarke and Stephens 1986: Chap. 5; Tsehaye 2014: 165–166, 170–171; Grant-Lewis 2014: 27–29).

Also, while the more racist and culturally controlling elements of colonial education may have disappeared (e.g. Altbach and Kelly 1978; Blakemore and Cooksey 1980: Chap. 2; Whitehead 2005; Bray et al. 1986: 7–11; Mugomba and Nyaggah 1980; Moumouni 1968) colonial education nevertheless continues to influence post-colonial education. This is because the basic ways in which a school operates including, for example, school management and organisation, teacher-pupil relationships, discipline and assessment were bequeathed by the colonial model and have not changed significantly since. Moreover, the introduction of

formal school by Christian missionaries in many countries in Africa has meant that schooling often remains strongly influenced by Christianity in terms of provision, content and ethos (Oudraogo 2010; Cogneau and Moradi 2014). Where relevant, reference will be made to traditional, Islamic and colonial forms of education but this is essentially a book on modern, formal schooling in Africa.

The book is based on a number of sources. First, a critical reading of a wide range of secondary sources in the form of books and articles on education in Africa in general and in specific countries accessed via the University of Birmingham library's electronic database. Second, a further, detailed, alphabetical internet search of sources on education in Africa country by country via Google and Google Scholar which revealed both further academic articles but also a wide range of other governmental and non-governmental documents on education in individual countries. I have tried to present as balanced a picture of education in Africa as I can but there is no doubt that my own research interests, personal knowledge and experience has also played a role in the themes selected for analysis and the arguments made. I hope that nonetheless the reader finds the content of the book both interesting and useful.

Birmingham, UK

Clive Harber

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My studies of education in Africa have been enhanced and developed by the many African students—and students of Africa—I have taught, supervised and examined. In particular I would like to acknowledge and thank my ex-doctoral students who have researched education in Africa—Jonathan Lwehabura, Vusi Mncube, Rovincer Najjuma, Richard Tabulawa, Elmon Tafa and Eline Wiese.

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# Goals for Education

## INTRODUCTION

Crucial to analysing and evaluating education is the issue of goals—what is it that education in a particular context is trying to achieve? What kind of individual and what kind of society and state? We can then ask what government policies exist, how they have been formulated and by whom, before asking how education is (or isn't) being managed and organised to achieve these goals and implement these policies. In this chapter, we examine the context for educational goal setting in Africa and the nature of the goals themselves.

## INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXTS FOR EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN AFRICA

In setting goals and policy for education, particularly in Africa, there is often an international dimension as well as a local, national one. While some educational policies may be of purely local origin, education policy at state level often results from the interplay of political forces and processes at local, national and international levels. As Ball (1998: 119) has written,

One of the tensions which runs through all varieties of policy analysis is that between the need to attend to the local particularities of policy

making and policy enactment and the need to be aware of general patterns or apparent commonalities or convergence across localities

Indeed, in studying education in ‘developing’ countries, as elsewhere, there is always a need to consider both global trends—globalisation—and local, contextual factors in educational policy and practice (Harber 2014: 19–22). Major features of globalisation shaping education policy internationally, including Africa, for example, are

- Economic factors—the spread of free-market, neo-liberal or capitalist economic policies and trading patterns to most parts of the globe
- Political factors—the attempted spread of ideas of democracy and human rights to many parts of the globe
- Environmental factors—the increasing awareness of the ecological or environmental interconnectedness of the world—that environmental occurrences in one part of the world affect other parts and that the world is one large ecosystem
- Technological factors—the actual, and immediate, interconnectedness of the world via information technologies such as the Internet, email, texting, skype, mobile phones and 24 h television news covering the globe—and the widespread use of the English language in using these forms of communication.

Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008: 198) argue in relation to sub-Saharan Africa that the goals and purposes of education have been reshaped by four interconnected international developments—globalisation, the changed focus of international aid agencies towards development assistance, the adaption of sub-Saharan African countries to the new world order with its new political emphases (i.e. democratisation) and the spilling over of new pedagogical ideas from the USA and Europe.

Indeed, formal education—schooling—is itself a global phenomenon. Education is considered by the United Nations to be a universal human right, and schools exist in similar shape and form to each other in most countries of the world. It is this model of education, formal education or schooling, often with its roots in colonialism that is the model of education that is often endorsed as one of the keys to development. Kendall (2009) argues that there is a near-hegemonic, bureaucratic model of formal, Western-style and state-provided schooling that defines and constitutes ‘education’ for development in the twenty-first century—as

sanctioned at the global Education for All conferences at Jomtien and Dakar and as inscribed in the globally authoritative UN's Millennium Development Goals which have stressed the achievement of universal primary education and gender equality in education.

The essential features of this taken for granted model of modern education are that children learn primarily from adults about high-stakes academic subjects, on a fixed schedule, in an indoor setting that includes particular features (desks, chairs, chalkboards, written teaching and learning materials). Moreover, there is an imagined linear development model from informal, family provided education concerning daily tasks and survival skills to 'modern' schooling systems:

The international development model of education posits that mass, state-sponsored schooling is: (1) central to the creation of a "modern" nation-state; (2) central to the development of "modern" workers and families; and, thus (3) central to a state's "modern" economic growth and international acceptance. The general conceptualisation of education and development has received critical attention since its inception, but has yet to be significantly challenged. (Kendall 2009: 422)

Moreover, targets for education are increasingly set at a global level. Within the United Nations Millennium Development Goals 2000–2015, for example, were the Education For All targets and their monitoring by UNESCO. These put a major emphasis on access to education and achieving primary education for all, stressing the social and economic benefits of education to individuals and societies. In 2016, these were replaced by the UN's new sustainable development goals or 'Global Goals' which put a greater emphasis on the quality of education. However, there may well be an element of imposition involved in this process of global goal setting for education for, as King (2007) argues, multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and UNDP as well as the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD played the dominant role in the construction of Millennium Development Goals and their associated targets so that '...they may well not be strongly owned by developing countries in the way that is often claimed that they are' (2009: 377). King quotes the then President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, to the effect that the World Bank with its UN agency partners had led the Education For All process for the previous 10 years on which King comments that,

Perhaps there has been insufficient attention to the processes whereby these different frameworks of the world's declared global agenda are actually embedded in the south and are owned by the south. (2009: 188)

So that,

The MDGs would appear likely to have more impact in aid-dependent countries than others, given the support by many donors but this raises the question of local ownership. (Danish Institute for International Studies 2009: 5)

Poorer countries are often highly dependent on foreign expertise; information and financing and international actors are therefore in a strong position to set educational agendas and priorities for a particular country (Verger et al. 2015: Chap. 1). Thus, it is important that in 2011 15 out of the 20 most aid-dependent countries globally were in Africa (Action Aid 2011: 20). In Mozambique, for example, between 1999 and 2010, the numbers of out of school children fell from 1.6 to 0.5 million and during much of the period 42% of the education budget was funded externally (UNESCO 2012: 144).

Phillips and Schweisfurth (2014: 97) go further and suggest that it could be argued that the motives may be more sinister and that the Millennium Development Goal of (primary) Education For All is more neo-colonial in nature, essentially reinforcing the interests of the powerful:

The role of primary education in reproducing social inequalities within societies, and in creating a compliant workforce in the less developed world to be exploited by wealthier nations, is an alternative perspective on the issue. Household wealth continues to be the most powerful predictor participation in schooling, perpetuating cycles of poverty.

Moreover, globally set goals for education are increasingly being reinforced by the use of internationally administered testing instruments,

...an expanding number of donor agencies and multilateral organisations are mandating some form of learning assessment to accompany their loans and other aid support. (Kamens and Mcneely 2009: 6)

Thus, the performance of education systems, including African ones, in terms of globally set goals is increasingly being measured, compared

and ranked in studies such as the OECD's PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment), TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Studies). The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), for example, carries out assessments of maths and literacy outcomes in 14 different African countries (Harber 2013: Chap. 1). There are many dangers of relying too heavily on globally designed tests in developing countries to make judgements and policy decisions regarding schools (Phillips and Schweisfurth 2014: 150–154). PISA responded to this type of criticism in 2013 with 'PISA for development' which aims to adapt its data collection instruments to better suit middle- and low-income countries, such as those in Africa. While the stated aims of PISA for development include improving learning and teaching and enabling middle- and low-income countries to develop national policies based on evidence, they also 'contribute to the monitoring and achievement of the Education Sustainable Development Goal' (OECD 2016: 3). Thus, they are also part of reinforcing the globally set goals for education discussed above which inevitably help to shape local curriculum goals for schools beyond purely national wishes because *what* they test (and what countries will therefore be ranked on internationally) is consequently perceived as 'important' knowledge. This then contributes to curriculum convergence across Africa.

Finally, even within education systems there are increasingly common forms of governance globally—for example, decentralisation, school-based management, school choice and competition and an increasing role for both private education and fees paid by users (Sayed 2010). This is partly the result of what is known as 'policy borrowing' or 'policy transfer' whereby countries import or copy, perhaps with some local adaptations, educational policies that have originated elsewhere—particularly from countries that are perceived to be doing well in terms of the international goals and tests referred to above (Rappleye 2012; Phillips and Ochs 2003). This is further discussed in Chap. 2.

Takvi-Amoako (2012) provides a useful study of the influence of external agencies on Ghana's 2003 Education Strategic Plan where there was '...unequal power in the Ministry of Education-donor interactions...and donors dominated the process by virtue of global policy frameworks (2012: 114). This domination happened, she argues because of three factors—the institutional strength (donor financial leverage, donor knowledge and authority, frailty of the MoE systems and capacity;

historical connections and donor-initiated policy frameworks such as the Education For All goals, the Millennium Development Goals and the Poverty Reduction strategies. It was also easier for donors to impose their vision and goals because the government and the Ministry of Education lacked a clear sufficiently vision for education (2012: 117–118).

However, while there are increasingly global relationships affecting education everywhere, including Africa, it is also important to remember that there are local factors as well. One of these, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, is supranational in that it applies to all African states. This was adopted by the Organisation of African Unity in 1990, entered into force in 1999 and frames educational goals for Africa. These include, for example,

- Fostering respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- The preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures
- The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, tribal and religious groups
- The preservation of national independence and territorial integrity
- The promotion and achievement of African Unity and Solidarity
- The development of respect for the environment and natural resources
- The promotion of the child's understanding of primary health care.

It also includes commitments to provide free and compulsory education, to encourage the development of secondary education and to progressively make it free and accessible to all, to take measures to encourage regular attendance at school and reduce dropout, to ensure equal access to education for all sections of the community, to respect the rights of parents to choose which schools their children go to, to ensure the religious and moral education of children, to take appropriate measures to make sure that children who are subjected to discipline are treated with humanity and with respect to the inherent dignity of the child.

However, the specific local context of education is also important—local histories, cultures and priorities influence educational goals and policies. For example, in most of Africa both the legacy of the national type of colonisation—British, French, Portuguese, Italian, German, Belgian—and the ethnic composition of the country can have an influence

on education, particularly in terms of the key issue of the language of instruction but also the language subjects on the curriculum. As mentioned above, notions inherited from colonialism of what constitutes a school and how it should operate are still influential in Africa and elsewhere. Moreover, if a religion such as Islam or Christianity is particularly significant or important in a country then this may have an influence on the structure and curriculum of education more than in neighbouring countries—as may the presence or absence of a history of factional, ethnic or religious violent conflict, the existence of an epidemic such as HIV/AIDS, or simply the different ways in which the education sector has developed and performed since independence. For example, while Takyi-Amoako shows how global donor educational priorities influenced the production of Ghana’s Education Strategic Plan, the process ‘...was located on the cusp of the global and national’ (2012: 131). Local, contextual priorities such as secondary education, vocational education and tertiary education were also important to the government of Ghana as these were supported by the electorate and if the government wanted to stay in power it had to argue for them to be part of the strategic plan (2012: 129). Examples of continuing national concerns and priorities in education in Africa will be further discussed in Chap. 12.

### TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

When considering the key goals or purposes for education it is important to distinguish between what might be termed ‘facilitatory’ goals and more fundamental goals for education. The more fundamental goals try to answer the questions posed above, i.e. what kind of state and society and what kind of individuals education is trying to shape. Facilitatory goals may well be very important but are more of a means to an end in that they help to achieve the more fundamental goals.

One important goal for education in Africa in recent years, for example, has been EFA—Education for All, achieving access to primary education for all those eligible to it (UNESCO 2015). Another common goal for schools and education systems in Africa is to produce literate people and a literate society. Another possible goal is numerate and scientific people and a numerate and scientific society. Examinations and tests are then usually set to quantify and judge whether both individuals and the society as a whole have achieved these goals. However, while these are often expressed as key goals for education, unfortunately, many people who have done

awful things—murderers, terrorists, dictators—have also attended school and been literate, numerate and qualified in science. Thus, these are facilitatory goals in that we also have to ask what literacy, numeracy and other skills will be used *for*—what are ultimate purposes or goals of education? Even reducing poverty, increasing employment and improving health, all common, important and laudable goals for education in themselves in the African context, are more intermediate rather than fundamental goals, as violence and crimes against humanity have been carried out by people who have a good income, are healthy and in work. Even the goal of gender equality, while very important, may not be a fundamental goal in itself if those educated persons in positions of power treat all people equally badly, or people are equally terrorised regardless of gender. The following quotation stresses this point,

All educational practices have to be understood and only have meaning within their ultimate philosophical and ideological frameworks. Even generally agreed on educational objectives such literacy and numeracy are not fundamental goals as it has to be asked, literacy for what? Numeracy for what? How do we want people to use these skills? Even phrases like ‘more flexibility’, ‘more creativity’, ‘more imagination’, ‘more independence’ or ‘more sense of enquiry’, are meaningless unless given an ideological context. Even happiness... is not context free. Let us take the theoretical example of a terrorist training camp. You could have a terrorist training regime which aimed to produce flexible, creative, imaginative and independent terrorists and did so. They may well also be very literate and numerate. And on top of that they may be happy and enjoy their training. Within its own goals it would have to be regarded as effective. But are the *goals themselves* effective? Are terrorists and terror a good thing to produce? (Harber 2004: 15)

Here, it also important to distinguish between goals of education which aim to genuinely educate and those which aim to indoctrinate or socialise young people into existing social and political values. Indoctrination emphasises one set of values which is viewed as the only correct or acceptable basis of education and which is applicable to everybody. It is an attempt to intentionally inculcate values and beliefs as facts or truths. The process may involve deliberately falsifying or ignoring evidence, as well as presenting it in a biased way. Political socialisation is the learning of preferences and predispositions towards political values and attitudes,

though often in contexts where other viewpoints are available. It is just that some ideas and values are taken more seriously than others. The ethos of schools in a particular country, for example, might sometimes provide cooperative experiences for children or even teach about the benefits of cooperation. Nevertheless, at the same time and overwhelmingly daily emphasis and priority is given to examinations, class rankings, prizes and competitive sports. Children therefore experience and learn that competition is far more important in life than cooperation. This is an example of what the Italian writer Antonio Gramsci (1977) described as ‘hegemonic’ ideas that is the dominant ideas in a society that support the ruling group and which are given far greater credence than other ideas in the media and in the education systems and indeed become taken as granted and seen as natural and inevitable. Both indoctrination and socialisation assume a ‘correct’ answer to social and political questions that young people must learn to accept as correct and the only right answer—the answer provided by those with power and authority. For example, colonial education in Africa, provided in missionary schools and those of the colonial state, were used to control local populations by teaching the superiority of the culture of the colonising power and by supplying the subordinate personnel necessary for the effective functioning of the colonial administration (Altbach and Kelly 1978). Education, on the other hand, aims to facilitate individuals to make up their own minds based on a range of evidence and open argument. It encourages critical analysis, discussion, the right to disagree and respect for the views of others.

So, what might these more fundamental goals be in the African context? Given the European colonial history of most African education systems, one goal might be to value and preserve the positive aspects of African cultural and linguistic heritage. This is, for example, a goal in Equatorial Guinea (Njiale 2014: 181) and in Kenya there is an emphasis on the need to ‘...blend the best traditional values with the contemporary ones in order to build a stable and modern society’ (Nyatuka 2014: 281). Given the ethnic diversity of many African countries based on their colonial boundaries, one further goal might be to promote national unity and loyalty to the state above loyalty to the ethnic group. The task of nation-building was particularly important in the more immediate post-colonial period, especially in a country like Nigeria which experienced a civil war between 1967 and 1970 (Harber 1989), though it remains an

issue there and in other African countries. In Kenya, for example, which has experienced ethnic conflict in recent years, one key goal for education is that it should promote,

Nationalism, patriotism and national unity – education should help the youth acquire the sense of nationhood and live together peacefully in order to make a positive contribution to the nation. (Nyatuka 2014: 280)

Though in Kenya, it is also recognised that international consciousness is important in a globalised world and that ‘...education should enable the youth to take up membership in the international community and its obligations, responsibilities, rights and benefits that come with it’ (Nyatuka 2014: 280).

Pride in the local culture but an emphasis on national unity are also key goals for education in neighbouring Tanzania. (Anangisye and Fussy 2014: 381–382)

This, however, still raises the question of how a such a nation-state should be run. After independence, some African countries saw education as a key tool for building socialism. In countries such as Zimbabwe and Tanzania, socialist political ‘education’ (often actually socialisation as discussed above) and education with production were key elements of the curriculum (Harber 1989: Chaps. 4 and 6; Sigauke 2013: 231). However, as a result of the wave of democratisation that swept through Africa after the end of the cold war (Harber 1997), replacing one party and military regimes, many African states, for example, Botswana, Gambia, Namibia, Tanzania and South Africa, now have democracy and democratic citizens as key goals for education, (Harber and Mncube 2012: 60). The Ministry of Education in Zambia has also stated that,

Zambia is a liberal democratic society. Hence, it is the value of liberal democracy that must guide the formulation of educational policies and their implementation. The core values are rational and moral autonomy, equality, fairness and liberty. (cited in Masaiti and Chita 2014: 437)

Likewise, Lesotho emphasises human rights, democratic values and respect in its goals for education. (Lekhethe 2013: 61)

Another possible fundamental goal for education in Africa, for example, might be to contribute towards peace and non-violence, both at an individual and societal level. Over the decade to 2008, 35 countries worldwide experienced armed conflict, of which thirty were low- and middle-income countries like those in Africa. 42% of the 61 million out of school children live in conflict-affected, low-income countries like those in Africa. The average duration of violent conflicts in these countries is 12 years, which is a child's entire primary and secondary school cycle. Over 43 million people have been displaced by armed conflict, and refugees and internally displaced people face major barriers to education. In 2008, only 69% of primary school-age refugee children in UNHCR camps were attending primary school (UNESCO 2011: 2). It is not hard to think of a wide range of African countries affected by violent conflict in recent years. In such conflicts, schools and school children have been seen by combatants as legitimate targets, in clear violation of international law. In 2014, over 200 school girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram, the extremist Islamic group in Northern Nigeria, and in 2015, there were attacks on schools and abductions of children in South Sudan (BBC News 24/2/2015).

Moreover, as we shall see later in this book, schools in Africa are often implicated in facilitating and causing violence themselves. However, one particularly disturbing example that reinforces the importance of the ultimate or fundamental goals for education is Rwanda, where in the genocide of April 1994 between 800,000 and a million people were murdered. In the Rwandan genocide, teachers from a Hutu ethnic background commonly denounced their pupils from a Tutsi ethnic background to the armed militia or even directly killed them themselves. The role of schooling in this genocide poses some very serious and important questions about why and how we educate in all societies. As two commentators on the Rwandan genocide put it,

The role of well-educated persons in the conception, planning and execution of the genocide requires explanation; any attempt at explanation must consider how it was possible that their education did not render genocide unthinkable. The active involvement of children and young people in carrying out the violence, sometimes against their teachers and fellow pupils, raises further questions about the *kind* of education they received. (Retamal and Aedo-Richmond 1998: 16)

This is why two key goals for education in Rwanda are ‘to educate the citizen in such a way that he/she is not characterised by any form of discrimination or favouritism’ and ‘to promote the culture of peace, tolerance, justice, respect for human rights, solidarity and democracy’ (Nzabairwa 2014: 301).

Finally, a key goal for education everywhere, including Africa, perhaps ought to be sustainable development. If the people of our planet over-exploit its resources such as water, land and minerals and contribute to climate change, then the future is bleak for all of us. There is no point in getting more children in school, achieving poverty reduction or greater gender equality if the ecosystems of the planet on which we live collapse. Writing on Africa, Manteaw (2012: 377) notes that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 argued that,

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of people to address environment and development issues...It is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent with sustainable development and for effective participation in decision-making. (cited in Manteaw 2012: 377)

In Kenya, for example, one goal for education is the appreciation of a healthy environment and the importance of environmental conservation and management (Nyatuka 2014: 28) and in Rwanda a key goal for education is sustainable development based on protecting and exploiting the environment (Nzabairwa 2014: 301).

One example of a country that has tried to establish fundamental goals for education in a systematic way is South Africa. The end of apartheid in 1994 presented an opportunity for a major rethink about the nature and purposes of the state, society and education. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) aims at ensuring democracy and as such is permeated by democratic principles and values. For example, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) in its preamble emphasizes a new set of values in moving away from the past so as to,

...heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; lay the foundations for a democratic and open society ... improve the quality of life of all citizens

and free the potential of each person; and build a united and a democratic South Africa. (Republic of South Africa 1996: 1)

The constitution therefore sets out the foundations for a state and society based on human rights, democracy, social justice and freedom. In 2001, the Department of Education in its *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* set out the fundamental democratic political values stemming from the constitution that should form the basis of the education system (Department of Education 2001b). These values and their educational implications are set out below.

Fundamental value	Educational implications
Democracy	Empowerment of population to exercise democratic rights; provision of skills to participate, think critically and act responsibly
Social Justice and Equity	Access to education is the most important resource in addressing poverty—only then will liberty be achieved. Reconciliation requires social justice to address past injustices—education for all is an essential element of social justice
Equality	Access for all to an educational provision that does not discriminate on any grounds. Equality in the treatment of all, by all
Non-sexism and non-racism	Regardless of race or gender, learners afforded the same opportunities and the same degree of security
Ubuntu (Human Dignity)	Mutual understanding and active appreciation of the value of human differences
Open Society	Participation rather than observation; empowerment to think and act; a culture of dialogue and debate
Accountability	Power and responsibility for all involved in education learners, educators, managers, parents, etc.
Rule of law	Rules within which learners, educators, managers, Parents, etc., operate—including the law of the land
Respect	Precondition for communication and teamwork—schools require mutual respect between all partners
Reconciliation	Acceptance of all individuals through learning about each other, valuing differences and diversity

From Carter et al. (2003: 16).

These goals are supposed to permeate schools and teacher education which in turn are supposed to be organised and operate accordingly.

The reality within educational institutions may often be quite different, but the goals are clear and relatively unambiguous.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the importance of goals for education—having a clear sense of purpose about what schools aim to achieve. It has discussed a number of important goals, but has distinguished between important facilitatory goals (attendance, literacy and numeracy), intermediate goals such as employment, poverty reduction and better health and more fundamental goals about the nature of the society and individuals that education wishes to help to shape. From Chap. 3 onwards, a key theme of this book will be the issue of congruence that is the extent to which the institutions and practices of education in Africa actually match the goals and aspirations set for them. However, in the next chapter we consider how policy makers in Africa attempt to translate goals into policy and what and who influences the educational policy making process.

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