

Educational Planning and Practices in Kenya

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Abstract: Education plays a key role in reducing poverty and enhancing life choices. Therefore provision of widely spread education and training opportunities has been a long-standing objective of the Government of Kenya. Since Independence, the Government has sought to address the challenges facing the education sector through a range of policy initiatives. Nevertheless, a major focus has been the attainment of Universal Primary Education and the need for achieving greater access, participation, equity, quality and relevance. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, the country has been faced with new challenges for educational policy, which incorporate both the right to universal access to education, and the need to enhance rapidly the development of skilled human resources. This is despite the government efforts to bring in major transformations with more than ten reviews by special education commissions and working parties having been established since independence. Moreover, increased public demand for education and training over the years has strained the government efforts in achieving its goal, and in response partnerships have been intensified with parents and communities, individual investors, civil society and donors so as to salvage the emerging challenges facing the education sector as it grows. On the contrary, there is continued evidence of disarray of business in the education system in Kenya today and so, at all levels the pressing challenge of how to improve quality, enhance efficiency and at the same time reduce unit costs must be addressed. This paper therefore seeks to explore and address the constraints facing educational planning right from basic to higher education, and how these constraints can be resolved so as to create a long-term solution to the problems that are putting education for the Kenyan child at stake.

Keywords: Educational planning, Practices, Challenges, Constraints, Way forward, Kenya, Universal Primary Education, Education Commission.

I. Introduction

Educational planning, in its sense, is the application of rational and systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of its students and society (Coombs, 1970). Educational planning involves a qualitative and quantitative continuous process, concerned not only with where to go but with how to get there and by what best course. It deals with the future depiction basing on the past. Its work does not cease when a plan gets on paper and has won approval, but continues until it is fully implemented. For planning to be effective, it must be concerned with its own implementation, progress made and unforeseen obstacles that may arise and how to overcome them. The planning process includes not only a projection of the development of the economy over the next few years, but also resource plans for the spending departments and the costing and revision of plans (Atkinson 1983). Planning is therefore an integral part of the whole process of educational management, defined in the broadest sense. It can help the decision-makers at all levels; from classroom teachers to national ministers and parliaments to make well informed decisions. It can do this by helping them see more clearly the specific objectives in question, the various options that are available for pursuing these objectives, and the likely implications of each. Planning can help to attain larger and better aggregate results within the limits of available resources. To achieve such benefits, however, planning must use a wide spectrum through which many interacting variables can be put in focus and all of them seen as part of the plan. Therefore it is important that before recommending any one course of action, planners must first see what room the decision-makers have as part of their plan. They must

look, for instance, at the state of the society, where it wants to go, and what it will require to get there, the nature of the students, their needs and aspirations. In most developing countries like in Kenya, education planners experience challenges derived from the rapid expansion of education such as over enrolment, low quality of education, inadequate funds and inadequate resources due to either parents' unwillingness to cooperate or the fact that they are too poor to raise money (Republic of Kenya, 2005). One of the central tasks of educational planning therefore is to try to keep the internal and external forces in the educational system at balance under dynamically changing circumstances and with efforts from all education stakeholders. That is, the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling need to be considered and executed expeditiously, if at all long term plans are formulated for future development. Otherwise, planning may not result into the expected results. This paper therefore seeks to explore the challenges that education planners face in the course of planning for the needs and requirements of the education system in the developing world.

II. The background of educational planning

Educational planning is backdated to ancient times. Here are some of the examples of early educational planning in linking a society's educational system to its goals. Spartans for instance, 2,500 years ago, planned their education to fit their well defined military needs, social and economic objectives. Plato during his reign in Athens, planned education that would suit the political and leadership needs. In China during the Han Dynasties and Peru of the Incas planned their education to fit their particular public purposes. Planning has been modified over time so as to fit in changing goals and expectations of the society (Coombs, 1970). These historical examples of educational planning cited above however differed in extent, objectives and complexity. Some were applicable to entire nations, others to individual institutions; some undoubtedly were far more effective than others; some were fragmented, others involved a continuous process over a long period; some were in a highly strict setting, others in a more democratic scene. They all had something to teach, but did not have all the features that could be depicted in a modern educational planning. For instance due to existence of more educational institutions following increased enrolment, planners have had to estimate how many students there would be, how many classrooms, teachers, desks and books would be needed to serve them adequately, the curriculum needs and methods of instruction as well as the appropriate examination system, how much money all this would require, where the money would come from, and how and when it would be spent. These various projections led to budgetary proposals for future academic calendars and eventually ended in a chain of decisions and actions. This is educational planning that needed efforts of competent planners. As educational institutions and systems grew larger and multifaceted, and as the budgetary proposals became more official, planning processes also had to acquire formality so as to provide for the stability and feasibility of established educational policies which would lead to further improvement in education. Therefore the main focus of planning was not only based on the technicalities and logistics of education, but on the needs of the students and society, as is currently evident in the goals and aims of an education system.

III. Educational planning in Kenya

The kind of educational planning that was done in Kenya prior to independence had these four key features:

- (a) It was short-term, except when new programs had to be incorporated so that facilities had to be expanded in which case the planning had to be projected further.
- (b) It was fragmented in that various parts of the education system were planned independently of one another.
- (c) It did not integrate the evolving needs and trends of the society.
- (d) It was not dynamic to changing educational forms.

But since independence up to date, planning has been done with incorporation of various education review commissions such as the Ominde Commission in (1964), Gachathi Commission (1976), Mackay Commission (1981) and the later Koech Commission. The government also launched the Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP) in 2005 which advocated for a shift from project planning of education to program planning and implementation. The plan describes how education provision across all sectors and nationwide would be planned, financed, managed, implemented and evaluated over the five years (KESSP 2005). The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology's strategic plan for 2005 to 2010 is among other economic strategies put in place by the government so as to help in implementing the education policies put under plan.

IV. Challenges in teacher planning

Experience in the 1950s and 1960s showed how critically the teacher supply planning was at mercy of changes which likely occurred in the rate at which teachers left the profession and future wastage rates which were powerfully influenced by demographic or economic factors and could not be predicted but had immediate effects on education sector. The wastage rates were further influenced by unpredicted retirement rates and high rate of teachers leaving school due to ill health or death. Moreover, teacher planning is affected by the time lags in training and absorbing teachers at various levels in the developing countries. In Kenya for instance, teachers take a minimum of two years to be trained and upon completion, they take sometime before they are employed by the government. This is unfairly in line with the increasing enrollments and student needs, hence putting the quality of education at stake. But if the time lags for training were reduced, then it would make work easier for education planners in terms of planning for the teacher capacity versus the enrollment over a long period of time (Zabalza et al 1979). Moreover, the teacher-student ratio in special units and schools which have adopted inclusive education is often too high, while the drop out rate for children with disabilities is high just because there are inadequate teachers and even the few who are available are not sensitive to the needs of this kind of learners. Sometimes it is a common feature that teachers and other staff within the school, ignorantly use inappropriate language in reference to disability and this erode self esteem and a sense of worth in students with special disabilities. What does this imply for an education planner? Those teachers are not adequately trained to handle the various kinds of learners in a school learning environment (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

Crowther, 1976, in his studies further found that since the variation in birth rate is obvious especially in developing countries, this leads to population movement between areas, especially to urban areas, and hence more teachers would be required in towns while in declining areas there may be a surplus. Some teachers just like other workers may not find it easy to move, this results into regional variations, thus causing considerable problems both to planners and teachers. Studies highlight a number of challenges facing teacher recruitment and retention in schools across developing countries, which include inadequacies in teacher preparation programs, high teacher attrition rates, difficulties in training teachers in some areas and lack of adequate teachers in specified subjects such as Mathematics and Sciences (World Bank, 2007). It is important to note that the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and Education for All goals in education cannot be realized without numbers of properly trained, qualified and motivated teachers. The quality of trained teachers both in the developing and developed world are becoming the hardest segment of the teaching segment of the teaching profession to attract and retain and is most expensive to achieve (World Bank 2005). Research also indicates that there is extensive employment of under qualified teachers and also teachers on contract in most developing countries (United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations, UNESCO 2006). This is further clarified by the current employment of teachers on contract in Kenyan secondary and primary schools, at the expense of over enrolment of students. This has put the quality of education out put at stake. In most developing countries, the governments are providing teachers for adult education and continuing schools and are trying to boost post literacy curriculum for those who wish to re-enter the formal system of education. This is in efforts to enhance adult literacy. In Kenya such efforts have brought the current literacy level to about 74%. However, according to the recent National Adult Literacy Survey, about 7.8 million adults are still illiterate, due to low participation and access to adult education programs, attributed to inadequate number of trained teachers, lack of teaching and learning materials, gender inappropriate teaching methods and poverty related issues (Republic of Kenya, 2011).

V. Unjust education policies

Gender mainstreaming and special education has not been properly addressed in most developing countries. Issues such as gender insensitive school learning environment, sexual harassment and gender biasness have been reported in most cases. Inadequate school infrastructure such as water and sanitation, lack of sanitary towels for girls, lack of positive role models especially women teachers in Science, Mathematics and Technical subjects and demand for primary, secondary and tertiary education which is high especially since the adoption of Education for All goals, Free Primary Education and Free Secondary Education, against the existing facilities and resources, result in issues of quality that affect girls much more than boys (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Despite the efforts by education stakeholders in most developing countries to enhance growth in special education sub-sector, this expansion has been limited in most cases. This clearly demonstrates that special education has not received special attention in most countries. This is coupled up with negative attitude from the communities and societies, and the cultural disadvantage and societal stigmatization suffered by people with special

needs. In addition, career stereotyping restricts people with disabilities to traditional oriented careers, discouraging them from venturing into more lucrative professional fields like engineering, architecture and medicine (Summers, 1992)

VI. Curriculum development

Most text books and other teaching and learning materials used in schools do not address the plight of learners with special needs, especially in illustrations and contextual representation. This has an effect not only by making this category of learners feel excluded but it also leaves them with no role model to emulate (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Such learners are often left out of very crucial part of curricula such as sex education, Human Immuno-deficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, HIV/AIDS and life skills education programs since people believe that children with disabilities have limited mental capabilities, and do not often engage in social activities including sex and sports and thus even no special sporting facilities are allocated for them. Concerning adult education, due to inadequate trained teachers in this sub-sector, the adult education curriculum does not adequately provide the functional literacy needs of the adults. This is majorly due to lack of a policy framework, which makes provision of adult education by various stakeholders to be uncoordinated.

VII. Challenges on quality of higher education

The manner of management of education institutions right from those of basic to higher education is a drawback factor against quality assurance in most developing countries. The World Bank (2007) expresses its concern on management and institutional leadership which usually determine good governance and achievement of institutional objectives. The quality of university graduates according to Uvah, 2005 could be measured by how well they have been prepared for life and service to the society in various spheres of human endeavor. This quality may also be measured by how good and efficient the teachers are, how adequate and accessible the facilities and materials needed for effective teaching and learning are and how well prepared the graduates are for meeting the challenges in life and solving societal problems. Education stakeholders including the government, labour market (employers), students, parents and the society at large do complain about the output of the Kenyan universities and that graduates from public universities are poorly prepared for Challenges work. Recently, the Kenya Commission for Higher Education Secretary directed all public and private universities to continuously review their training programs to suit the changing market demands, since most employers have had to re-train graduates from institutions of higher learning, yet this is a waste of money and time. "It is our duty as major stakeholders in the education sector to re-align our programs with expectation of vision 2030", the secretary noted, adding that among some of the major challenges facing many universities today is inadequate qualified members of the academic staff (Makabila, 2011). Many graduates are hence being viewed as half-baked. The big question is that, what could be the major factors against the quality assurance in Kenyan universities? Among them are:

- Rationale of student admission into the university i.e. some students cheat their way into the university through national examinations cheating, and these deficiencies will persist and eventually manifest in them as low quality products. In Kenya for instance, cheating in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations is rampant and especially in Mathematics and Sciences, since it has been easier to detect as students make similar mistakes in certain questions. According to studies by Onderi (2011a), grading of Kenya's national examinations based on compulsory subjects fails many students who would have otherwise passed genuinely. This is why in some instances; some stakeholders find no logic in making Mathematics and Science subjects compulsory for all students irrespective of their desired careers, so that equity in all subjects is provided. More over, admission to the private universities has contributed to lowered standards of education since students who did not qualify for regular intake can still be admitted for a competitive course in private university just on the basis of ability to pay for the expensive course training.
- The projected accelerated intake of form four leavers to the public universities this year will definitely have pressure on the existing physical infrastructure and human labor, evident by a lot of part timers in the university academic teaching staff, rather than adequate full time employees. These challenges among others if not addressed properly, are expected to contribute to strain on available physical and human resources, and this will in turn lower the quality of education in Kenya.

In Kenya for instance, schools and higher institutions of learning, appointment of lecturers to administrative posts without prior training on management and more often there is no one to direct them on what is expected of them, to expose them to management. Past researches show that there is government interference in appointment of chief executives, weak

institutional structures for governance and infringement of academic freedom (Mwiria, 2007). Moreover, it is a common feature in most developing countries that post graduate students at the universities almost double the time taken by students in developed countries such as American or European universities. In Kenya, PhD and Masters Students take a long time to complete their research, and this leaves the education planners in a state of confusion especially in having to plan for extra cost for supervision manpower and facility usage against the rising number of post graduate students admitted every year. The question is why do students not complete their degrees on time, especially at postgraduate level? The reasons include;

- Lack of adequate qualified manpower to supervise the post graduate students;
- Lazy supervisors or supervisors too committed to their own private businesses;
- Lazy students and some normally relax after completing their course work;
- Lack of incentives for lecturers who supervise post graduate students;
- Poor schools' management hence poor mechanisms to identify poor supervisors;
- Some universities have over enrolled Masters and PhD students, against a very small pool of qualified teaching staff. There are cases where some lecturers have as many as 20 Masters and 10 PhD students, a number that is too high; whereas the agreed global rate should be about 10: 1 for Masters and 5: 1 for PhD.
- The old school professors are in many cases responsible for a high drop out rate of post graduate students, mainly because of their negative attitude. Since they took many years working on their Masters and PhD, they don't see why their supervisees should take shorter periods.
- Cost of research, whereby many students cannot go beyond course work because they lack funds, yet in Kenya for instance there is no university which spends more than 10% of its revenue on research.
- Many university libraries do not have enough materials. Graduate students are therefore unable to access important information and this drags behind their progress. This is a common feature in public universities unlike private universities where at least the stock in the library is of recent books and journals, and even the internet services are available for research by the post graduate students. (Amutabi, 2011).

VIII. Fear of technological advancement

Technology is a critical form of wealth to a nation. Therefore, innovation, research, development, information and communication and science and technology are among the key pillars of education and training. To enhance teaching and learning in secondary schools, the MOE has disbursed a total of 4 million per constituency for 5 secondary schools. Currently, the form one integrated syllabus for Information and Communication Technology, ICT has been developed in all the subjects for the same. Teachers are now required to be ICT compliant in order to enhance their teaching pedagogies (ROK 2005). In Kenya, media has significantly played a recognized and powerful role in disseminating educational information to its large population as well, as its prominent role in the molding of public opinion. The advancement of technological development in Kenya has made it easier for accessing information through various gadgets such as the internet, television, radio, calculators and mobile phones. The print media for example is attributed to vigorous advocacy campaign against HIV/AIDS especially since it was declared a national disaster in 1999. This has been done through featuring articles and other information related to the disease (Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre, ARSRC 2006). More so, education has been made much easier with type advancement of technology especially the invention of the internet. For instance, information can be obtained in a matter of seconds from the web, other than seeking for it through long procedures in the libraries. Communication has also been made easier since the invention of mobile phones, internet and telex. Unfortunately, technology has come with its shortfalls. For example, use of mobile phones has made it possible for candidates to cheat in exams (Nation team 2010). The invention of computers has replaced human planner and human resource in education sector. This is evident by increased number of e-learning centers in various institutions of learning. In focus to attainment of vision 2030, ICT is among the key pillars for industrialization in Kenya. This has therefore called for equipment of Information and Technology, IT among people. However, the entrepreneurs have found it viable to put up IT training centers of their own, even behind shops as private businesses yet the skills they impart in learners are inadequate with needs of the competitive job market. The trainees therefore end up desperate and this has led to dilution of the essence of ICT standards (Hernes 2005). ICT has also contributed to the rampant moral decay amongst the youth. There are sites on the web which propagate pornography and are most popular with the learners. Some television programs especially the 'soap operas' have not impacted well in the learners. In fact this is among the prevalence causes of mobile phones in schools. The essence of this therefore is that the education planners still have to put in place stringent

measures so as to deal with this culture that is out to erode the quality of education. Due to technological advancement, machines are replacing human labour, hence a threat to planning.

IX. Rationale of teacher pedagogy and national examinations

National examination results in most developing countries leave education stakeholders with a lot of question marks. In Kenya for instance, during schools' prize giving days, the celebrants are the individuals who have scored grades A. They are celebrated because of the great roles that they will hopefully play in the economy as doctors, pilots, engineers, lawyers, corporate managers and planners. However, the awarded individuals are in the minority. There is a bunch of high school graduates who obtain grades D+ and below, that we need to think about. In Kenya for instance, take Gatundu district in central province, data shows that out of 117 district schools with 9, 013 candidates who sat for KCSE examinations in 2010, 31% (3, 198) obtained a grade D+ and below (Kinyanjui, 2011).

The questions that arise for an education planner are;

- Where do these students go?
- What is their future?
- What is their role in development and societal transformation?

What is the essence of this? At the age of 18, high school graduates with grades D are sent out into the world, inadequately prepared for the competitive labour market. This in fact erodes their confidence since they are viewed as examination failures. They lack analytical skills of good citizenship required for societal transformation especially in a developing nation. The society is actually committing a crime against this generation of the youth by condemning them to hopelessness, yet there are no adequate village polytechnics to absorb and train the so called 'examination failures' on the hands on kind of jobs. Worth noting is that the 'D' culture is later exhibited in the manner of parenting their children. It produces irresponsible parents especially when it comes to their children's education; their children go to school unkempt, and are not motivated to learn, and as a result, they score grades that are no better than those of their parents: the D grade reproduces itself. Education planners are therefore left with a gap to fill, so as to make education a vital tool that meets its societal expectations.

X. Political Influence in education systems

Despite the government's intervention to transform the education system geared towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs), political interference in the allocation of resources has been skewed towards the politically sound regions. This is evident by the parity in the distribution of higher learning institutions. Moreover, despite the planning for fairness in education funds allocation in the constituencies, the decision on how to carry out this allocation lies majorly on the area member of parliament. In realization of this challenge, the government initiated Economic Stimulus Programs (ESP), in order to stimulate the economy. Each constituency was allocated 30 million in order to modernize their school infrastructure to be at par with the rest of the well established schools. The Ministry of Education has also formulated intervention of measures through provision of funds to schools in order to raise their general infrastructure. With enactment of the Constituency Development Fund Act in 2003, there has been a tremendous growth in school's expansion and hence this has brought the need to review the teacher distribution in Kenya. Political influence eventually leads to decline in donor contributions like the International Monetary Fund, World Health Organization and the World Bank.

XI. Lack of proper planning techniques

This is evident in most developing countries. Sometimes the government sends few teachers to schools against rising enrolments and this forces the school committees and boards to employ teachers at their expense. This results to impulse spending and unexpected deficiencies in resources. Planners have little time dedicated to their task due to other commitments and this leads to haphazard planning which later do not meet their expected objectives. This improper planning is also many a times caused by poor economic status of most of these countries so that lack of adequate finances leads to insufficient monetary allocation to various sub-sectors of education leading to low productivity.

XII. Recommendations for possible solutions to the challenges

For a nation to develop we need to work towards inculcating a positive self image in the young citizens by ensuring that we give them quality education. We need to create a critical mass of self assured individuals. This will help in improving the quality of education offered in learning institutions. But from the aforementioned discussion, it is evident that education planners need to re engineer their planning processes in order to curb the issues discussed. The following are some of the recommendations and the proposed possible solutions to the challenges facing education planners in Kenya:

(i) More teachers to be trained in all sub- sectors of education so as to cater for the rising demand hence enrolments at these levels.

(ii) To ensure quality in student output by the universities, primary and tertiary levels of the education system must also ensure quality in their productivity. Examination malpractices at these levels which have a great challenge to the validity of the scores attained by candidates must be fought. Disciplinary measures should be put in place by the examining bodies and schools should develop policies in regard to cheating so as to eliminate the cheating culture, and inculcate a culture of learning, necessary for imparting appropriate skills for future careers.

(iii) To ensure that long term plans are formulated properly for future development, the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in education need to be considered and executed expeditiously; teachers should be involved in decision making so as to promote their morale hence their support for the school administration.

(iv) Head teachers should have the ability to measure and correct performance and should ensure that school events conform to plans so as to achieve the set goals.

(v) Community participation should be encouraged so as to take in to account their views concerning how they want the schools to be managed; this will boost their support for the school management and administration.

(vi) A lot of sensitization workshops should be mounted to all the education stakeholders especially the management boards in order to impact the necessary skills to them so as to be able to deal with the day to day emergent issues in education.

(vii) Quality Assurance needs to be vigilant on teacher and supervision at all levels of learning so as to check on whether the teachers are implementing the practical teaching methods which are normally advocated for in the in-service training, INSET programs such as SMASSE (Strengthening of Mathematics and Science in Secondary Education).

(viii) Like in North America and in Europe, there should be proper institutional mechanisms at the universities so as to identify poor supervisors; those with poor track records. I.e. the new post graduate students should be given supervision records for lecturers so that they are free to make their choice of supervisors.

(ix) The lecturers should get incentives in terms of lowered teaching loads, especially when they have more than the average number of supervisees. I.e. supervision should be regarded by the universities as part of normal teaching. This will boost their teaching motivation

(x) The education systems should continue to mainstream children with special needs in the national education system and they should develop guidelines for gender responsive interventions to enhance participation and gender equity in the education.

(xi) Appropriate gender responsive curriculum and co-curricular activities, sporting facilities, sex education, life skills, ICT and assessment of teacher education and learning activities for children with special needs should be designed and implemented.

(xii) Affirmative action for admission of female learners and learners with special needs in secondary and tertiary institutions should be strengthened with a view to increase enrolment and enhance gender equity and equality at these levels of learning.

(xiii) Regular review of adult literacy rates and continuing adult education with a view of incorporating emerging issues in this sub-sector and mainstreaming them in the curriculum.

Remark: If the above recommendations are rigorously put in place by all the educational planners involved, then Kenya will be able to sustain the policies made in the education sector, for achievement of its long-term goals.

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