INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES IN CURRICULUM WITHIN ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE AND POST CONFLICT CONTEXT: STRATEGIES, PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

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This article offers a critical examination of the relationship between the economic foundations, the developmental policies underlying to those economic foundations and the targets set for education sector. The transformation of international economic foundations involves great reforms of international development policies which are promoted by international organizations and relayed by States. That is the process of "policy borrowing" in which new ideas developed elsewhere are transmitted and applied in an environment other than that in which they are developed. The article defends an argument that although the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is supposed to address the local contexts of three spheres (environment, society and Economy), its integration in education systems of countries that heavily depend on external assistance follows the process of policy borrowing. Thus, this article shows the challenges that face the local education system while integrating ESD ideas that are developed elsewhere.

Keywords: Education system, sustainable development, developing countries, economic foundations, international institutions

Introduction

The institutional basis of African school systems is in the colonial school. However, the consolidation of the involvement of African countries in the development process and implementation of educational policies has been only observed after the period of independence (1950-1970). Since the 1960s, the role assigned to various African education stakeholders, including the "State", has continually changed according to the doctrines promoted by international institutions. Initially, this change has had positive effects on the definition of education systems and increased enrollment. These effects were hampered by the financial and economic crisis observed in all African countries during the 1980s. The decline in enrollment that followed has led to the transformation of power relations of education actors characterized by the more pronounced interventionism of external donors during the process of development and implementation of school policies. Henceforth, donors have tried to counteract this acute schooling by an increase in financial aid for education (Lange, 2003).

The results of the influx of external funding were soon to be felt. By the 1990s, various educational reforms were developed and implemented under the influence of donors. They had, according to ADEA (2003), the merit of having given a serious boost to the partnership between governments and international institutions, to a consideration of the increasingly assertive role of civil society and non-governmental organizations in education policy. In addition, they have contributed to the education of a larger number of children through international actions as EFA (Education for All), UPE (Universal Primary Education), MGGs (Millennium Development Goals), etc. The transformations in partnership between local governments and international institutions were characterized by increased influence of these international institutions in the process of elaborating, implementing and evaluating the developmental strategies. For different reasons, the local governments implemented the developmental strategies that are promoted by those international institutions. One of those programs is the Agenda 21.

The Agenda 21 is one of those strategies promoted by the international institutions in order to support the efforts toward development. It is the result of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (known as the Earth Summit) that was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Agenda 21 «provides a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by UN agencies, governments and major organizations (NGOs, CSOs and networks) to reduce the human impact on the environment» (UNESCO, 2009).

From a critical examination of the impact exerted by the Agenda 21 on the evolution of education

system in Rwanda, the article attempts to determine the role of economic foundations and related developmental policies in the transformation of education system of developing countries. The article used qualitative methods mainly based on content analysis. It also has opted for a general review approach, covering literature that provides an overview of the concepts and practices of ESD, as well as program evaluation studies. Additionally, qualitative evaluation of documents related to ESD in Rwanda was conducted, using in-depth interviews and dialogue with individual students as well as teachers.

Evolution of African Education Policies through Time: From Voluntarism Paradigm to Sustainability Paradigm

The involvement of local African leaders in the process of development and the implementation of educational policies started after the African countries independences (1950s-1970s). At the moment, the dominant ideology was aligned with the Keynesianism approach which advocated a strong State that controls all regulatory functions. Initially, the State control produced positive effects on the management of education systems. In Africa, the newly created states were eager to develop the social sectors which had been neglected by the colonizers, particularly the education and the health sectors. Their priority was to increase the schools enrollment, especially after the Addis-Ababa conference of May 1962 that insisted on the implementation of free and universal primary education.

From the Paradigm of voluntarism to the Paradigm of Economic Development

These positive effects were hampered by the economic crisis observed all over the world during the 1980s. The financial decline that followed the economic crisis led to the interventionism of the Bretton Woods institutions in the development and the implementation of school policies. Thus, the central role of the State was seriously questioned. The involvement of international financial institutions was followed by the local governments' withdrawal. It led to the implementation of structural adjustment programs (SAPs). As a result, the Keynesianism approach was replaced by the neoliberal principles and the market economy. Unlike the Keynesianism which advocates the control for the public actions, the neoliberalism favors differ-

ent practices such as the minimal State interference in business activities, the world entirely governed by the private exchanges, the privatization in all public sectors, the minimum public expenditure on social services, etc. (Azoulay, 2002 ; Nubukpo, 2013; Peemans, 2002).

Therefore, the withdrawal of state and its replacement by the international financial institutions goes with the implementation of privatization policy, the decentralization system and the public expenditure reduction. It had an impact on the responsibility of African States within the education system. Since then, their role was limited to the development of regulations and to the minimum coordination of education system. In addition, the major component of structural adjustment programs was the reduction of the government deficit. It implies the decrease of government spending with a direct effect on social sector expenses, particularly for health and education sectors. Consequently, during the 1980s, various educational reforms were imposed by international financial institutions in order to reduce the cost of education: the multi-grade teaching, the double shift, the repetition rate reduction, the privatization of education, the priority for the education of girls, the loss of civil servant status and salary reduction for teachers, the decreased academic level of newly hired teachers, the priority for primary education funding at the expense of higher education and reducing the cost of education. Hence, the quality of education has deteriorated and the school dropout increased.

From Paradigm of Economic Development to the Paradigm of Sustainability

In mid 1980s, the United Nations' children's fund (UNICEF) published a report which stimulated new transformations in the managerial process within countries that depend on international aid. The report pointed out the lack of social impact of adjustment programs which was considered as one of reasons of developments actions failure (Cornia, Jolly, & Stewart, 1987a, 1987b). Later, other institutions and organizations intervened to testify, with indicators in support, of the degradation of human conditions due to lack of social dimension in the adjustment structural programs (PNUD, 1997). Since then, an aspect that highlights the social impact was integrated into structural adjustment plans. This aspect was introduced in the form of social adjustment program. Consequently,

in addition to the doctrines focusing on the open economy aligned with the market and the competitiveness, other features were added such as democratization, improvement of the human rights situation, etc. In 1989, the World Bank introduced a new concept of "good governance" (World Bank, 1989) which brought new components into the governance system of countries that depend on international assistance. The newly introduced components include the local ownership, the local empowerment and the local accountability. Meanwhile, international financial institutions were trying to counter the increasing school dropout by an increase in financial assistance to education (Lange, 2003; Rugengande, 2010).

In order to improve the harmonization of actions and the coordination of external assistance, various initiatives were undertaken. They include the initiative of the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC). They include also the sector wide approach (SWAp) which was adopted as an alternative to the project approach that seems condemned to a gradual disappearance. It is in this context that from the year 1993, the structural adjustment programs in which the role of the State was considered as ″minimal″ were replaced by the poverty reduction strategies (World Bank, 2002a) that promote a ″small State but strong″ which governs along with the civil society and the market (Cling, Razafindrakoto, & Roubaud, 2003 ; Altinok & Lakhal, 2007). Thus, the partnership process which gives much more responsibility to local actors was reinforced. The government was no longer considered as a regulator of education activities but a facilitator of the collective action that involves different education actors.

In countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the neoliberal's principles and the market logic changed education systems through the structure adjustment programs adopted in 1980s. They came into action after the Harare conference on education had observed difficulties in African education systems due to economic crisis (UNESCO, 1982a, 1982b). Nevertheless, the role of local actors and the partnership process were not mentioned in the public policies that were implemented in 1980s. They appeared in 1990s after the Jomtien conference (article 7 of the Jomtien declaration on education for all) (UNESCO, 1990). They were reinforced and strengthened in 2000s after the Dakar conference on education (UNESCO, 2000). The education program adopted at Dakar advocates a tripartite partnership (civil society-donors-states) that facilitates the integration of local population in the implementation of the 'Education for All initiative (UNESCO, 2000). Since then, local participation and local ownership were included among the criteria for assessing the credibility of African education strategies (World Bank, 2002b). Later, the World Bank introduced the education for all fast track initiative in order to strengthen the partnership process and the harmonization of actions in African education systems (World Bank, 2004; World Bank, 2006).

Sustainable Development: Historical Overview

Sustainable development is a concept that is continually evolving. Its roots can be traced in the thoughts about sustainable forest management which were developed in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the moment, England was facing a problem of the depletion of timber resources. Meanwhile, some authors, such as John Evelyn (1862) or Carl Von Carlowitz (1713) suggested drastic measures regarding forest management. According to Evelyn, one of those measures was that planting trees should be regarded as a national obligation for land owners. Since then, different authors published research on the management of forest. This resulted in the development of a science of forestry leading in turn to the development of environmental movement in 1960s.

Before the emergence of environmental movement, researches were only concerned with the forest management in order use of resources wisely. The change that occurred in 1960s brought a new perspective. The environment movement highlighted the relationship between economic growth and development and environmental degradation. From now on, researches focused on the way to develop an economic system that fits itself into an ecological system with limited resources. Until there, the concept of sustainability was not yet used. It came into force during 1970s when a group of scientists stated reflecting on the way of developing a "global equilibrium" as an "a model output that represents a world system that is sustainable without sudden and uncontrolled collapse and capable of satisfying the basic material requirements of all of its people" (Finn, 2009, p. 3).

Although suggestions on sustainability of nature started in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the concept of sustainable development emerged in1980 when the international union for the conservation of nature published a world conservation

strategy (IUCN, 1980). In 1982, the United Nations reinforced the concept of sustainable development by publishing the five principles of conservation that are used to guide and judge the human conduct in order to reduce its effect to nature. The concept was clarified in the United Nations report published in 1987 and entitled Our Common Future and commonly called the Brundtland Report. The report developed one of widely recognized definitions of the concept of sustainable development. The concept was defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43). Since the Brundtland report, the concept of sustainable development "has developed beyond the initial intergenerational framework to focus more on the goal of "socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic growth" (Sachs, 2015, p. 5). In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro published the Earth Charter, which outlines the building of a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It is commonly known as Agenda 21.

In 2000, a comprehensive set of 18 goals was developed and was supposed to be achieved in 2015. It was called Millennium development goals (MDGs). It included the aspects of sustainable development. However, it was accused of looking more to the quantity indicators and less quality indicators. Hence, the sustainability of its achievements were not highlighted. That is the reason why from September 2015, a new set of goals was adopted by the world leaders in the UN general assembly. It was called Sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Sustainable development goals officially known as Transforming our World, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are a comprehensive set of 17 goals which will go above and beyond the remarkable past accomplishments of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to create a sustainable world by 2030. Formed through extensive worldwide consultations with all segments of society, with an emphasis on targeting global challenges, the SDGs are a comprehensive development plan to leave no person behind. The goals were officially adopted by world leaders in September 2015 in the UN General Assembly. The 15-year agenda for sustainable development begins on January 1st 2016, to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and fix climate change.

Sustainable Development and Education: Panoramic Overview

Education is presented as an important tool for the achievement of sustainable development. From the time sustainable development was first endorsed at the UN General Assembly in 1987, the parallel concept of education to support sustainable development has also been explored. From 1987 to 1992, the concept of sustainable development matured as committees discussed, negotiated, and wrote the 40 chapters of Agenda 21. Initial thoughts concerning ESD were captured in Chapter 36 of *Agenda 21*, "Promoting Education, Public Awareness, and Training."

In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution 57/254 that designated the period from 2005–2014 as United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). During this period, governments are expected to promote education across all sectors on sustainable development using both formal and non–formal approaches. In addition, the UN also mandated UNESCO to spearhead the implementation of the Decade by providing support to governments to develop an International Implementation Scheme (REMA, 2010).

The United Nations' Decade for Education for Sustainable Development or DESD (2005-2014) encompassed action themes, including overcoming poverty, achieving gender equality, health promotion, environmental protection, rural development, cultural diversity, peace and human security, and sustainable urbanization (UNESCO, 2005). The World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (2009) defined ESD as « an approach to teaching and learning based on the ideals and principles that underlie sustainability» (Kopnina & Meijers , 2014, pp. 1-2) including with key issues as: «human rights, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, climate change, gender equality, corporate social responsibility, protection of indigenous cultures in an integral way, it constitutes a comprehensive approach to quality education and learning» (UNESCO, 2009)

Sustainable Development in Rwanda: From a Global Perspective to a Local Initiative

Rwanda has participated and subscribed to resolutions and agreements of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held at Rio de Janeiro during 3rd to 14th June, 1992 in

Brazil, referred as Earth Summit (Nsanzimana & Tushabe, 2010). In response to this commitment and as part of the contribution towards sustainable national development, Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) is taking the lead in the development of the Environmental Education for Sustainable Development (EESD) Strategy for Rwanda. The document has been developed through a consultative process involving a wide range of key stakeholders to ensure an inclusive and high level national participation in the implementation of the strategy (Nsanzimana & Tushabe, 2010). EESD provides an innovative model that encompasses public awareness, education and training to enhance the understanding of sustainable development (Nsanzimana & Tushabe, 2010).

Strategies for Implementation of ESD in Rwanda Education System

The EESD present key priority programs that have to be implemented in Rwanda such as promotional Programme on EESD; EESD Leadership Programme; EESD in Primary and Secondary Schools; training program for the Media on EESD Reporting; and mainstreaming EESD into Technical and Higher Education program (Nsanzimana & Tushabe, 2010).

In order to implement these key priority program, ten strategies were developed such as advocacy, vision building and promotion of education for sustainable development; capacity building, professional development and training; curriculum development and orientation; networking and partnerships; research and Innovation; public awareness raising; information dissemination; information and communication technologies; establish Regional Centres of Expertise; and monitoring and evaluation (Nsanzimana &Tushabe, 2010).

Challenges Related to ESD in Rwanda Education System

The role of education for sustainable development is acknowledged in Rwanda. Thus, sustainability is highlighted in different document that are related to poverty reduction and economic development such as Vision 2020 or Economic development and poverty reduction strategy (EDPRS). Consequently, sustainability is emphasized in education sector strategy which is based on the documented above-cited. However, the implementation of education for sustainable develop-

ment faces challenges. These include lack of measurable indicators the achievement of objectives; a set of objectives defined outside the sphere of education; unclear Concepts and paradoxes; confusion between ESD and Environment education; lack of basic requirement for a proper conduct of a lesson, etc. These challenges are not the panacea of Rwanda. They are observed in all educational systems where the education for sustainable development is implemented

Lack of measurable indicators for the achievement of objectives

The relationship between education and sustainable development is complex. Generally, research shows that basic education is key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainability targets. Research has shown that education can improve agricultural productivity, enhance the status of women, reduce population growth rates, enhance environmental protection, and generally raise the standard of living. But the relationship is not linear (Mckeon, Hopkins, Rizzi, & Chrystalbridge 2002). It implies the combination of three different spheres (environment, society and Economy). This makes it difficult to define measurable indicators to determine the achievement of ESD objectives.

A set of objectives defined outside the sphere of education

Unlike most education movements, ESD was initiated by people outside of the education community. In fact, one major push for ESD came from international political and economic forums (e.g., United Nations, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Organization of American States). As the concept of sustainable development was discussed and formulated, it became apparent that education is key to sustainability. In many countries, ESD is still being shaped by those outside the education community. The concepts and content of ESD in these cases are developed by ministries, such as those of environment and health, and then given to educators to deliver. Conceptual development independent of educator input is a problem recognized by international bodies as well as educators (Mckeon et al., 2002).

In Rwanda, the ESD was implemented through the guidelines, strategy and action plan determined by the Rwanda environment management authority. The guidelines were based on a National environmental education for sustainable Development (EESD) (Nsan-

zimana & Tushabe, 2010). Even if the documents re-lated to ESD guidelines and action plan precise that the methodology followed during their development was participative, they do not precise the level of implica-tion of Ministry of education or the unity in charge of curriculum in Rwanda education board. Hence, the guidelines give emphasis to the environmental educa-tion whereas the well-being of ESD three areas (en-vironment, society and economy) is intertwined, not separated (Mckeon et al., 2002).

Unclear concepts and paradoxes

As mentioned above, the ESD concepts are de-veloped elsewhere. Above all, they are often developed in a sphere other than education. Thus, Sustainable de-velopment is a difficult concept to define. The fact that it is continually evolving, "makes it doubly difficult to define" (Mckeon et al., 2002, p. 1).

Some of the issues addressed by the ESD are paradoxical. This phenomenon is illustrated by two major issues in the international dialog on sustainabil-ity: population and resource consumption. According to Mckeon et al. (2002, p. 1),

> increases in population and resource use are thought to jeopardize a sustainable future, and education is linked both to fertility rate and resource consumption. Educating females reduces fertility rates and therefore population growth. By reducing fertility rates and the threat of overpopulation a country also facilitates progress toward sustainability. The opposite is true for the relationship between education and resource use. Generally, more highly educated people, who have higher incomes, consume more resources than poorly educated people, who tend to have lower incomes. In this case, more education increases the threat to sustainability.

Confusion between ESD and Environment education

Documents talk about the implementation of education for environmental conservation (REMA, 2010) without addressing neither the indicators for achievement of sustainability through balancing social, economic and environment nor the indicators to evalu-ate that achievement.

Lack of basic requirement for a proper conduct of a lesson

In order to facilitate the teaching of ESD

lessons in Rwanda, REMA had planed different ac-tions and initiatives which include providing relevant text books; teacher training through both pre service and in service methods with the use of distance learning; imparting of good values and attitudes in Rwandese culture including those that promote gen-der equality and equity as well as those from outside which are relevant to national development; develop-ment competencies such as life skills, practical and entrepreneurial skills shall be emphasized at all levels of the education system; strengthening scientific and technological research in all research centres, includ-ing universities and other institutions of higher learn-ing (Nsanzimana & Tushabe, 2010). Some of those activities were realized, others are still remaining on the level of planning.

Conclusion

The transformation of international economic foundations involves great reforms of international development policies which are promoted by interna-tional organizations and relayed by States. It is in this way that new economic ideas which are developed elsewhere are transmitted and applied in an environ-ment other than that in which they are developed. It is in this context that since the Rio summit in 1992, countries around the world attempted to develop and implement sustainable development strategies.

Education is considered as a central dimen-sion for the realization of sustainable development. But, to be successful, the actions for sustainable development should go beyond the promulgation of documents and focus on *multi-stakeholder participa-tion, partnerships, country ownership, shared vision with a commitment to continuous improvement, ca-pacity development and the ability to build on exist-ing knowledge and processes and a clear focus on outcomes*. This article emphasizes strategies in which education for sustainable development (ESD) is integrated into education systems within developing countries. It shows that the ESD integration passes through three phases: (a) a new economic order is developed internationally and changes the existing international norms and standards; (b) the new norms and standards are promoted by international insti-tutions and relayed by local governments through international forums, seminars and workshops; (c) national planners rely on the standards to develop a

guideline to follow in terms of development policies.

The article argues that the requirements for an effective implementation of Education for Sustainable Development in local curriculum are complexes. The fact that Education for Sustainable Development is a "borrowed policy" integrated in local socioeconomic context implies that the Education for Sustainable Development takes many forms around the world and local education systems are facing challenges while implementing those requirements. Those challenges are mainly based on the tensions between the global economic order and the local realities. They include but not limited to: lack of organization, leadership and cross-cutting management issues, limited planning capabilities, lack of multi-stakeholders' participation, partnership and ownership; lack of multi-sectoral thinking, integrated or cross-cutting management, lack of linkage between the new economic thinking and local practices, social-cultural issues, etc. Therefore, the progress in practical implementation of education for sustainable development strategies is slow.

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