

Progress towards UPE in Africa

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INTRODUCTION

I am attempting in this paper to focus on the African countries which were represented at the Addis Ababa conference of Ministers of Education in 1961 and the subsequent conferences in Nairobi (1968) and Lagos (1976). These include all the former British and French Colonies together with Ethiopia and Liberia. Being a Nigerian, I will naturally draw heavily on the experience of my own country for any generalisations I make.

The concept of Universal Primary Education cannot easily lend itself to a precise definition. Although an attempt is made to define it in general terms as 'that state of education practice where, by conscious effort, communities attempt to make opportunities for learning and self-improvement available to all their peoples', in fact most African Governments have taken generalised access to education to imply the expansion of primary education; that is, school continues to be regarded as an essential educational agent although its function and roles may require to be redefined. Certain countries, for example, Kenya, endeavour to generalise access to the first three or four years of primary education in the first phase, whereas others give priority to increasing the number of years of primary schooling offered. In still other countries the duration of primary schooling has been reduced from eight to six years owing to financial constraints. Certain newly-independent countries with high rates of illiteracy and low rates of primary school enrolment combine priority to primary education with that accorded to adult education. The eradication of illiteracy for both children and adults remains a crucial problem in vast areas of the Continent.

The different strategies followed in generalising access to education appear to reflect differences among groups of countries in terms of prospects of providing universal primary education. Many governments, realising that the prospect of achieving Universal Primary Education is still remote feel that the youth and adults who have not attended school (or have not benefited from adequate schooling) should receive, through different modes of delivery, basic education common to all and to which every individual is entitled.

At the Addis Ababa Conference of African Ministers of Education in 1961 a goal was set for Universal, Compulsory and Free Primary Education by 1980. Interim targets for 1970 were set at 70 per cent of school-age children in primary schools, 15 per cent at the second level. Strenuous efforts were made throughout the decade of the 1960s in expanding school facilities. By 1970 several countries had managed to double their enrolments in primary schools. Many countries, however, fell far short of the targets that had been established. In retrospect, it may be said that the Addis Ababa Conference in 1961 was remarkable both for the targets set and the detailed exploration of how to reach these objectives. The training of teachers at various levels, salaries of teachers, the supply and equipment of classrooms, the production and distribution of suitable textbooks, all these components were considered. Nevertheless, the record shows a severe shortfall for many countries in reaching the 1970 target

and a similar lack of capacity in regard to achieving UPE by 1980. (It may be noted here that the 1980 targets included not only UPE, but also that 30 per cent of the relevant age group would be receiving second-level education, while 20 per cent of those completing second-level education would be able to find places in higher-level education.)

Whatever has been achieved by African countries on the long-term targets set by the Addis Ababa conference needs, however, to be viewed against the background both of population increase and of efforts being made to increase enrolments.

Population in African countries (excluding the Arab countries) increased at an average annual rate of 2.7 per cent from 1970 to 1975, at (an expected) 2.8 per cent from 1975 to 1980, and will probably reach 3 per cent between 1980 and 1985. This is the highest rate for countries grouped for major areas in the world. The population under 15 years in 1975 was 44 per cent of the total population of Africa (excluding the Arab countries) as compared with 25 per cent in developed countries; in 1985 it will be around 45 per cent in Africa and 24 per cent in the developed countries: This age group is expanding faster than total population in the African countries but slower in the developed countries. (Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1977.)

This demographic development combined with the slenderness of resources and other constraints, which will be mentioned later, affect all efforts African countries are making on progress towards Universal Primary Education.

Another factor which should be taken into account in the provision of generalised access to primary education is the fact that 70 to 90 per cent of today's boys and girls in tropical African nations are growing up in the rural areas. Some of these young people will gain further education and work in the cities. A few with specialist training will obtain rural wage-paid jobs as clerks in Local Government Councils or as agricultural extension workers. But the great majority will have to find their life vocations as self-employed rural producers. They will work within characteristic small-scale enterprises through the countryside, in their present home localities or in other villages or rural towns, Governments are therefore faced with difficult problems in determining how best (a) to provide appropriate continuing education and (b) to expand work opportunities that are productive and remunerative for these rural youth.

The capacity of any particular nation to meet these objectives depends, in large measure, on the pace and direction of economic development. What has become increasingly evident during the past decade is that some nations are in a much more favourable position than others to educate and employ young people. Zambia, Gabon, Nigeria, with substantial revenues generated from mineral exports, for example, are better able to assist their younger generations than, say, Somalia, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, where the dynamic for development deriving from exports is much less.

The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the expansion of primary education of countries of the Region, highlighting several common problems and attempts to overcome these problems. If in the course of this paper, I show bias towards Nigeria it is because, in the first place, I am a Nigerian and, secondly, I happen to be one of the actors in the implementation of the Universal Primary Education scheme in Nigeria, which began in 1976.

EXPANSION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION: BASIC FACTS AND PROPORTIONS

Among the nations of the African region during the 1960s widespread primary schooling was accorded a special role in development. As mentioned above, this

was affirmed at the 1961 Addis Ababa Conference of Ministers of Education when the goal was set for Universal Primary Education by 1980. What was accomplished? Despite determined efforts, by 1970, of the 40 million primary school-age children, the proportions reached were only 38 per cent (15.2 million) enrolled in primary schools and 7 per cent (2 million) of the age group attending second-level education. The proportions achieved thus amounted to roughly half those set for the interim target. A point to note is that while the average national rates of increase of enrolments during the 1960s were 5 per cent each year for primary education, those of secondary education were 14 per cent each year. In 1972 there was a shortfall of around 11 million in relation to the target set for primary education. It is true that the enrolment ratio for primary education, which had been 41.5 per cent, had risen by 1975, according to present estimates, to 59.1 per cent, but if the existing trend continues the percentage in 1980 will be only 59.5.

Thus, on the negative side, the 1970 figures reveal that some 62 per cent (24.8 million) of school-age children were not attending primary schools. If the rural areas were taken separately this proportion would be at least 75 per cent. It may also be pointed out that in 1972 some 3.76 million children, who ought to have entered schools that year, were not enrolled and that 1.36 million others who had dropped out before their fourth year of schooling were in considerable danger of lapsing into illiteracy. The problem of repetitious and dropouts certainly warrants careful scrutiny, not only because of the effect on costs and efficiency of the education systems but also on account of potential social repercussions.

These overall proportions of primary school enrolments, however, conceal a variety of national achievements. Table 1 gives the gross enrolment percentages by country for primary education and also annual average growth rates from 1970 to the reference year.

Country	Reference Year	Enrolment Ratios: Gross %	From 1970 to the Reference year: Annual Average Growth Rate of Enrolment %
Algeria	1975	89	6
Angola	1972	79	9.1
Benin	1975	53	9.9
*Botswana	1976	92	7.1
Burundi	1976	22	-4.2
Central Africa Empire	1975	79	6.7
Chad	1976	41	(a) 2.4
Comoro Islands	1973	51	15.5
Congo (Peoples Republic)	1975	155	5.7
Egypt	1975	72	1.7
Equatorial Guinea	1973	72	4.5
Ethiopia	1974	23	9.9
Gabon	1976	202	4.5
*Gambia	1976	32	6.9
*Ghana	1972	58	-2.4
Guinea	1971	28	-12.0
Guinea Bissau	1976	123	21.8
Ivory Coast	1975	87	6.0
*Kenya	1976	105	12.5
*Lesotho	1976	119	3.2

Country	Reference Year	Enrolment Ratios: Gross %	From 1970 to the Reference year: Annual Average Growth Rate of Enrolment %
Liberia	1975	62	5.5
Libyan Arab	1976	155	9.1
Madagascar	1975	88	3.9
*Malawi	1976	63	10.6
Mali	1975	28	4.4
Mauritania	1971	17	10.1
*Mauritius	1976	103	-1.1
Morocco	1975	61	5.7
Mozambique	1972	52	7.7
Niger	1976	21	10.3
Nigeria	1975-1976	50	11.6
	1978-1979	86	15.8
Rwanda	1976	61	0.7
Senegal	1975	45	*3.5
*Sierra Leone	1975	37	4.4
Somalia (b)	1976	45	38.3
Sudan	1976	39	6.6
*Swaziland	1976	103	5.0
Togo	1976	103	9.6
Tunisia	1977	100	0.8
*Uganda (c)	1976	51	6.3
Cameroon	1976	120	(d) 13.6
*Tanzania	1975	70	16.2
Upper Volta	1976	16	6.0
Zaire	1972	88	3.4
*Zambia	1975	95	4.7

*COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES

Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1977

It should be noted that the reference year for the above is 1972 and the figures refer to Government-maintained and aided schools only. They do not include moslem or private schools though they do include intermediate schools.

Note on Gross Enrolment Ratio

The Gross Enrolment Ratio is the total enrolment of all ages at the primary level divided by the population of the theoretical age group for primary schooling, that is, according to the normal entrance age and the normal (or official) duration of primary education. These gross ratios may be severely distorted, in particular due to repetition and also to inaccurate population data. Ratios far above 100 per cent certainly need closer examination which cannot be undertaken within the context of this presentation.

If we group the individual countries according to their enrolment percentages in 1970, it is of interest that they fall into four broad groups. (The countries mentioned below are those for which these proportions are readily available.)

In the first group are seven countries with enrolments between 8 and 21 per cent; included are five French-speaking West African countries and two others.

Somalia	8
Upper Volta	10
Mauritania	12
Niger	12
Ethiopia	13
Mali	19
Chad	21

The second group has 11 countries with enrolments between 24 and 33 per cent.

Burundi	24
*Gambia	25
Guinea	26
*Tanzania	29
Liberia	30
*Sierra Leone	30
Dahomey (Benin)	31
*Malawi	31
*Uganda	31
*Nigeria	32
Senegal	33

In the third group are 14 countries with enrolments between 49 and 71 per cent.

Ivory Coast	49
Togo	52
*Kenya	54
*Swaziland	54
Madagascar	55
Rwanda	55
*Botswana	56
Central Africa Republic)	57
*Ghana	61
Zaire	61
*Lesotho	65
Cameroons	68
Equatorial Guinea	68
*Zambia	71

The fourth group has three countries with enrolment ratios between 87 and 93 per cent.

Congo (People's Republic)	87
Gabon	91
*Mauritius	93

*Commonwealth countries

COMMON PROBLEMS

In the process of expanding primary education a number of economic and educational difficulties have been revealed which have differed in severity from one country to another. Certain problems are general.

1. Finance

Foremost among these difficulties has been the strain on central and local governments' budgets in paying for primary schooling, particularly recurrent costs, with teachers' salaries and teachers' training absorbing over three-quarters of the recurrent payments. Differences exist among national economies in the emphasis on expansion of primary relative to secondary, post-primary vocational classes, polytechnic institutions and universities. Typically, expenditures for recurrent costs of formal education have risen to absorb from 20 to 25 per cent of total public expenditures and in certain cases has reached 40 per cent, over half of which was used for primary education. By contrast, low proportions of budgets were allocated to out-of-school education through extension services for health, agriculture and community development.

2. Manpower

Ironically enough, money may be available and the country unable to mobilise its efforts within the budget deadline for reasons such as the absence of skilled manpower, the length of waiting periods for procurement or simply for administrative procedures. This happens often in regard to construction and in the provision of equipment. The capacity of national construction firms frequently proves insufficient or not well adapted to the building of facilities in remote areas. Some countries have to import almost all building components and unfortunately distance from the sea may increase further the costs and the delay in delivery.

3. Quality of Education

Difficulties of a different nature arise from the requirements of teachers resulting from the implementation of large-scale expansion of primary education. The numbers of teachers required, the duration of their training, their work and salary conditions their bias towards teaching in urban rather than in rural schools, require to be taken into account well before the expansionary phase actually begins. With the hurried expansion of primary education large numbers of unqualified teachers have had to be hired, with consequent effect on the quality of education available to the children (particularly so in rural schools).

4. Drop-outs

In the estimates made at the Addis Ababa Conference provision was made for a yearly attrition from primary school classes - but the actual drop-outs have far exceeded the number forecast. A typical situation in several countries reveals that of 100 pupils who start in primary grade one, one-half have given up by grade four, perhaps one-third attain the final grade and an even lesser percentage complete the full primary school course. Frequently, this has meant a reduction in the size of classes taught by one teacher and thus a significant rise in the recurrent unit cost per pupil. The situation in the former Western Region of Nigeria (now Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Bendel States) is a good example to cite here. Universal primary education was attempted in this particular region in 1955. The ILO did a study on drop-outs for three

successive school generations. The drop-outs for the whole region were as follows: 1959-1964, 52.5 per cent; 1960-1965, 55.4 per cent; 1961-1966, 58.0 per cent. But in the rural areas the drop-out rates were much higher. For instance, while Ibadan city had a drop-out rate of only 20 per cent, rural towns of Otta and Ilaro had a drop-out rate of 47.2 per cent. Schools sited in villages of less than 5,000 population had a drop-out rate of 69.5 per cent and schools sited in villages of less than 700 population had a drop-out rate of 84.9 per cent.

Reasons for the high rate of drop-outs were varied: Inability of families to meet the school fees or, in areas where no fees were charged, to meet such modest expenses as school uniforms; the labour contribution of older children was required at home or on the family farm; a recognition by parents that there was less likelihood than in former years that schooling would lead to better paying jobs than those within the family enterprise, also lack of reinforcement from parents to what is learnt at school especially in illiterate homes.

Sometimes children 'drop-out' from school because the classes do not exist. Thus, some primary schools offer only the first grade or only the first three or four grades. This has been illustrated by a special survey* for which 16 African countries supplied information. The study showed that between 1969 and 1971 in these 16 countries the percentage of schools which did not offer the last grade could be grouped as follows:

Less than 30 per cent	- Ghana, Mali, Togo
30 to 49 per cent	- Congo, Gabon, The Gambia, Chad
50 to 69 per cent	- Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia
Over 70 per cent	- Central African Republic, Upper Volta, Niger

5. Relevant of the Curriculum

This is the most vigorously debated of all topics relating to the development of education in Africa today. The arguments are complex with varied degrees of emphasis, but divide into two main lines. One side advocates making the curriculum terminal for those who cannot go to secondary schools and thus making it more job-centred, practical and geared to local economic activities. The other side argues that the purpose of primary schools is not to teach young boys and girls occupational skills but to teach them literacy and numeracy; that the establishment of such vocational primary schools would create a tier of schools recognised by parents as inferior to the more academic ones. One problem that should be explored, if the education at the primary level is made more job-centred, is how to establish a balance in the total school programme.

*UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1972 Table 3.3

6. Employment Problem of School Leavers

This has been a major problem of educational expansion because of the social implications. It is inevitable that primary school leavers, who cannot continue at the next formal educational level, who are still quite young and vocationally unqualified, need further assistance to continue their education, whether on the job and/or in special classes.

APPROACHES TOWARDS HELPING SOLVE SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS

1. Search for Additional Sources of Finance

A guiding principle, well-tested in parts of several countries of the Africa region, is that families and communities are more willing to contribute towards some purpose which is close at hand and which they value highly. Thus, one proposal is to encourage much greater local contributions, which does not necessarily mean re-introducing or increasing fees payable by parents. The method of collection will vary according to local acceptability and practice. The practice of grants-in-aid from the central government would be initiated or revived with discriminatory procedures to help areas of particularly low (or non-existent) money circulation and to encourage demand where there is little tradition of modern education.

2. More Classrooms Built and Maintained by Local Contributions

On the capital side, thousands of classrooms could be built and maintained by local contributions in money, labour and materials (under the advisory services of central government with specific standards observed). Where the tradition of this kind of self-help does not exist and cannot be made practical, direct intervention by government would be essential. In highly-urbanised centres, the Parents/Teachers Associations have been found useful in these circumstances. However, the long-term solution may be the development of suitable industries on a multinational basis (regional or sub-regional) adapted to local needs and conditions. This calls for regional co-operation especially of a group of countries facing similar problems - in order to avoid high costs of imports and to mass-produce building elements, furniture, equipment and materials.

3. Self-Financing of Schools

Another suggested approach to help solve the problem of resource constraints is the introduction of a measure of self-financing into the system. In addition to the pedagogical value of manual work, there is evidence from both developed and developing countries that it is possible to organise learning centres for children, adolescents and adults that are linked with productive activities such as factories, for example, a farm or a workshop, the revenue from which could be ploughed back into the educational operation. An example of this type is the 'Centres d'Enseignement Revolutionnaire' in Guinea, where the productive revenue provides a substantial portion of the operation budget. One problem here is to establish a proper allocation of time between, and respective emphasis on, the theoretical and the practical. It must also be asked whether there are effective local instructors available to avoid the expenses of technical training and whether the productive activity and output will fit the local economic pattern? Answers to these questions would enable decisions as to the feasibility of introducing self-financing, or partially self-financing, projects in particular situations.

4. Reduce Unit Costs by Improving Teacher/Pupil Ratios

Because of the rising cost of education, many countries have found it necessary to seek ways and means of easing financial pressures by various innovations designed to lower costs. One approach being investigated in several countries affects the supply of teaching services, which constitute the largest element in education budgets. Attempts have been made to cut unit costs by such procedures as the shift system and reduced teacher/pupil ratios. The problem here is to discover how teachers can teach more pupils without a fall in standards. In parts of Zambia, where population density permits, double sessions have been introduced. Most schools in Lagos, Nigeria, have introduced three sessions per day for all primary school children.

5. Use Teachers from National Service Programmes

Another approach has been to diversify teaching personnel by using former students who for the time being are in National Service Programmes - as in the Republic of Benin where the 'Service Civique National' provides for one year of teaching; or the literacy and rural development campaigns in Ethiopia, Guinea, Somalia and Tanzania, which are led by secondary and higher education students or even by mature primary school leavers. Other examples of attempts to relieve Ministerial Budgets are the experiment in community-financing of teachers in Togo and the self-help (Harambee) secondary schools in Kenya, financed by voluntary contributions and fees.

6. Use Auxiliary Teachers on a Voluntary/Part-Time Basis

Another method of extending teaching services without markedly increasing the salary bill is to use auxiliaries and community professionals and technicians to support regular teaching staff, either on a voluntary or part-time salary basis. This requires a survey of overall community human resources to discover which persons might be effectively utilised in both school and out-of-school learning situations. Other questions, however, must also be answered: What training measures are necessary for such personnel and at what cost? What problems might arise in bringing together the formally-trained teacher and the resource persons in a community?

7. Share School Facilities between Children and Adults

A few countries have resorted to multiple use of school facilities, especially in rural areas, in order to achieve economies in the use of expensive buildings and equipment. Thus, after regular school hours, classrooms are used for demonstrations or lectures by extension services, for adult classes, for community meetings, for the showing of films by mobile units. Tanzania, for example, has abolished the term 'primary schools' and replaced it with 'Community Education Centres', indicating the determination to make the fullest use of the facilities.

8. Introduce Alternate-Year Intake in Sparsely-Settled Areas

Children cannot be expected to walk to school more than a few kilometers especially under a hot sun or in heavy rain. Given this fact, the total possible yearly intake each year to a rural school may be only 20 pupils or less, whereas the teacher is capable of teaching 40. Several countries, therefore, take in a full class every other year and are thus able to make

more efficient use of teachers. Another important measure is to merge small schools in areas where the number of schools, judged by the size of classes, does not warrant keeping all of them open.

PROGRESS TOWARDS UPE - THE NIGERIAN EXAMPLE

Nigeria launched its Universal Primary Education scheme in September 1976. Nigeria is a large country (923,786 sq.km.) and among the most densely-populated in Africa; its population of about 80 million is spread over 19 states, with an average of 87 inhabitants per sq.km. in 1978

Although the original intention was to make the UPE scheme compulsory, this aspect had to be deferred to allow the scheme to generate its own momentum first. In terms of its resource implications and its social and economic impact, the UPE scheme is regarded as one of the most significant innovations in Nigeria's socio-economic development.

In 1972, the net enrolment ratio for the population between 6 and 11 years of age was 33.7 per cent, which constituted a rate below the African average of 44.2 per cent.

The projected enrolment figure of 2.3 million children added to the enrolment figure of 5.1 million pupils already in primary schools throughout the country should have given us a total of 7.4 million pupils by the first year of the scheme. What happened in reality was that 3.0 million pupils were enrolled and the total school population rose to 8.3 million. In the 1977-1978 school year that figure rose to 9.8 million as against the projected figure of about 8.8 million pupils. There are, of course, valid reasons for the discrepancies. In the first place, in some States in Nigeria, particularly where primary education is well understood and is very popular, a vast number of children who were not yet six years old were enrolled. Secondly, in other States a large number of children whose ages range from 6 to 8 were enrolled. The programme, however, carries an enrolment target of 11.5 million pupils by 1980. In addition, it is hoped that by 1982 when the first stream of pupils will graduate from the scheme, the total enrolment will reach an estimated figure of 14.1 million pupils. The total number of new classrooms to be built was estimated at around 151,000.

It is easy to imagine the scope and the number of actions to be undertaken. One had to plan two years before the launching of the programme to train 163,000 additional teachers. For training of such a large number of teachers Nigeria would need to have recruited 8,000 additional teacher-trainers locally or if need be from abroad. In terms of quality the curricula had to be revised and new textbooks published in 13 different subject-areas and in six national languages.

Teacher education is considered crucial for the successful implementation of the UPE scheme. Emergency training programmes were initially undertaken to produce a nucleus of teachers needed for the successful launching of the scheme with the Federal Government assuming full financial responsibility.

For the emergency training programme for teachers the following procedures were followed:

- (a) Pupils who had completed six years of primary schooling were selected for teachers' colleges for five years training to obtain Teachers' Grade II Certificate, which is the minimum professional certificate for primary school teachers.

(b) Those who completed secondary education but failed to obtain the West African School Certificate were enrolled to spend two years in the Grade II Teachers' Colleges in order to qualify as primary school teachers.

(c) Pupils who obtained the West African School Certificate after completing secondary education spent only one year in Teachers' Colleges to qualify as primary school teachers. These constitute the bulk of teachers used for the initial launching of the UPE.

The emergency period has since passed and the emergency programmes has been converted to a more regular teacher training programme. To facilitate rapid recruitment and retention of in-service teachers, new incentives were built into the conditions of service and basic salaries. By 1980 it is hoped that around 6,700 new classrooms will have been added to primary teacher training institutions, resulting in a total student enrolment of about 234,000.

Teacher education has grown rapidly reflecting a considerable measure of success in the various programmes instituted by the State Governments, supported by the Federal Government. Enrolment virtually doubled within the two-year period from 1974-1975 to 1976-1977, increasing from 78,000 to 149,000.

Another problem is the qualifications of teachers already in the primary schools. Unfortunately it is difficult to obtain comparable data on teachers' qualifications from all 19 States. This is due in part to different grouping of types of qualifications: For example, in respect of Grade II certified and failed, several States report as 'Others' all untrained teachers, whether West African School Certificate holders or primary school leavers and this group comprises up to 50 per cent of all teachers.

The numbers of unqualified and under-qualified teachers in the primary schools far exceed the numbers of those who are qualified. UPE has aggravated the problem to such an extent that by 1982 the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers could well exceed 180,000. This would mean a dangerous dilution of the quality of teaching. The Federal Government has foreseen the problem and has established the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Kaduna, for the specific purpose of providing upgrading courses for these teachers while they continue to render useful services in the classroom. In order to extend the scope of this effort, a scheme is being worked out whereby the NTI and the various Institutes of Education in Nigeria will co-operate to train a substantial number of 'lead teachers'.

The 1975-1980 on-going plan provided 300 million naira for the building of around 151,000 classrooms and 200 million naira for the implementation of the teacher training programme. These turned out to be mere estimates. On the material level, it is not easy to administer such a vast investment programme throughout the country. Provisional planning and special administrative methods and techniques have to be introduced in the administration of national education and previewed in the Development Plan in order to achieve the objectives within the time limit specified.

One needs as much planning as administrative skills and certainly more innovative skills, when educational democratisation strategies are centred around the development of a large-scale literacy programmes (other than primary education for the young). Being aware of the difficulties encountered by large-scale literacy programmes throughout the world and the causes of particular failures, the performances of countries of the Africa region may well be considered as exceptional. The following examples can be quoted: From 1970 to 1973 more than 3 million Tanzanians attended literacy courses;

in Somalia in 1974, of 1.2 million people enrolled in literacy courses in rural areas, some 789,000 passed their final examination.

CONCLUSION

A visible and obvious characteristic of the African educational scene is the expansion of primary education, in response to social demand. This continuing rise can be attributed partly to the pressures consequent upon population increases but also to the growing belief that the quality of life can be improved through education. Increase in enrolment is the direct result of officially proclaimed government policies that every child should go to school. The Government of Nigeria, for example, in its National Policy on Education, states unequivocally that Universal Primary Education is needed to accelerate the pace of national development.

The main issue underlying the expansion of educational facilities is one of timing. What is the desirability of expanding schools quickly in response to popular demand, balanced against financial constraints, which limit quantitative expansion and deeply affect quality control during the expansion process?

A development strategy that features educational expansion must continue to strive for a balance between quantitative expansion and the maintenance of quality. Phased planning and political pressure, nevertheless, are not ordinarily synchronised towards achieving the same expansion goals. Problems of lowered standards emerge as existing resources are depleted. To an extent that cannot be overlooked, the absence of precise planning of the reform and revision of educational content, methods and techniques may block the implementation of a programme or seriously delay its progress.

Once some form of Universal Primary Education is started it becomes exceedingly difficult to control the demand. Furthermore, each successive educational level begins to feel the population pressure from below. Those with primary education want secondary education for their children, those with secondary want higher education. Thus each generation starts from a new platform of higher expectations.

Although statistics on progress towards Universal Primary Education in the Africa region are inadequate and not very reliable, there is visible evidence from country to country that massive expansion has taken place in education especially at the primary level. It is hoped that this trend will continue.

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