

Education Reform in Southern Africa since the 1960s: What Progress Has Been Made?

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ABSTRACT The investigation reported in this paper centred on the socially relevant question of whether a number of countries in Southern Africa, particularly their education systems, had not only succeeded to shrug off their pre-independent past and heritage, but also whether they have made significant strides in terms of the education reform that form part of their broad socio-political restructuring. After having stipulated a number of input, throughput and output criteria, the researchers examined a purposive sample of eight systems. Their educational initiatives during the past fifty years were surveyed. These include expansion of education supply, examination reforms, curriculum reforms, teaching methods, higher education, vocational education, higher education expansion and the eradication of adult illiteracy. The researchers found evidence of improvement in the systems through the greater availability of education but not so much of improvement in the quality of the education systems in question. The paper ends with a number of recommendations for addressing shortcomings in this regard.

INTRODUCTION

In several respects, the countries of Southern Africa (South Africa and its immediate neighbours) form a unity. They share a similar colonial past and heritage, are geographically in close proximity, socially and economically intertwined (as member states of the Southern African Development Community – SADC – in which they share the common objective of the economic development of the subcontinent and because of migration patterns), have similar population compositions (with somewhat more Whites in South Africa and Namibia than in the rest), experience increasing multiculturalism and cultural diversity (migration from the north to South Africa for a better future, and returning home with money and other resources; political refugees seeking safety elsewhere; the *de facto* disap-

pearance of national boundaries), and they share infrastructure (railway lines, rolling stock, roads, petroleum, electricity and foodstuffs) (see Meredith 2005). In addition to this, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia form the Rand monetary union, and these four plus Botswana form a customs union.

Research Sample

Since a great deal of data regarding the social situation and education are available for eight of these countries (seven Anglophone plus the Francophone Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)) but not for the others in the SADC region, this paper focuses only on those eight as a purposive sample, namely Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. (Since the two Lusophone Southern African countries, Angola and Mozambique, had a pre-independent history different from the other countries, it would have been unfair to include them under one rubric with other countries in one article.)

Statement of Problem

As in all parts of the world, the member states of the SADC place emphasis on education in

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preparing them for successfully dealing with the socio-economic challenges of the 21st century and further into the future (refer Wolhuter 2008). Unsurprisingly therefore, these states spend on average between 20 and 25 percent of their annual budgets on different facets of national education, and up to 31 percent in the case of Namibia. Such large expenditure on education has been a feature of life in these countries since independence from the 1960s onwards, done in an effort to make up for time and for the educational opportunities lost under the rule of colonial masters. Yet, in Developmental Studies in general, the study of education remains a marginal element (McGrath 2010). The problem addressed in this article is, from a socio-political and education systems perspective, what these countries have been achieving with this relatively large allocation of resources to education. To what extent do the respective education systems conform to certain reform criteria?

After analyzing the broad socio-political and educational situation in the eight Southern African states, the researchers concluded that while these states have made strides in the reform and expansion of their national households including their education since independence in the 1960s, they still face formidable challenges. The researchers found, for instance, that the failures of these systems still seem to outweigh the progress that has been made during the last five decades in terms of educational input, throughput and output. The researchers also concluded that these systems have nevertheless taken important steps towards shrugging off their pre-independence past and heritages. In the rest of this paper the researchers shall provide evidence in support of these contentions. They firstly outline the conceptual-theoretical framework that they developed for assessing the socio-political and educational situation in each country through delineating the key concepts of the investigation and connecting them theoretically with the problem that they investigated. This is followed by a report on our analysis of the education systems of the eight Southern African countries in the sample. The paper concludes with a discussion of our findings and some recommendations.

RESEARCH METHODS

For purposes of developing the conceptual-theoretical framework, the researchers made use

of an interpretive-constructivist approach to the data (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009.). Their analysis of the key words of the investigation led them to drafting a theoretical framework in terms of which they could interpretively approach the education systems in the different countries, and with which the researchers could formulate an opinion about the degree to which they seem to conform to the criteria that they propound in the framework (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). Since the researchers approached the different systems descriptively and weighed our findings against the conceptual-theoretical framework, their research method in analyzing the systems can be referred to as descriptive-normative (Creswell and Garrett 2008).

Conceptual-Theoretical Framework

Key Concepts and Criteria

The key concepts of this investigation were *education reform* (progress made in this regard), *Southern Africa, the 1960s* and *reform criteria*. The researchers defined *Southern Africa* as the seven Anglophone countries plus the one Francophone country mentioned above. The concept *since the 1960s* refers to the time when these countries began gaining their independence from the previous colonial masters. The term *education reform* in turn refers to policies and actions taken by the different governments and departments of education for restructuring and changing the education system inherited from the pre-independence period in order for it to conform to the criteria which the researchers discuss below.

A *criterion* is a yardstick, in this case for determining whether a particular education reform measure complies with certain standards or expectations. The following are examples of such benchmarks: the rate and quality of the output achieved with the monetary and other inputs that are being made; student enrolment in terms of numbers and ratio; quality of infrastructure, the internal efficiency of the system including the quality of teaching and learning, the throughput in terms of numbers of students successfully completing their schooling after 12 years, and in terms of outcomes with respect to societal effects. Regarding the latter, literature on 21st century societal trends, and the Ministers of Education of Africa (MINEDAF; see UNESCO 1961,

1998, 2010) during several conferences held since 1961 identified the following as imperatives that education systems in the region should conform to: nine years of basic education (education for all); education for adult literacy; increasing teacher education capacity; aligning the education system to the world of work (training a pool of human resources); creation of social capital; education for social mobility; empowerment of indigenous / minority languages; eradication of poverty; Africanization of curricula; democratization of education; high quality education, and equal opportunities for all (refer Steyn and Wolhuter 2008).

For purposes of this analysis of the eight systems, the researchers collated the criteria mentioned above in three categories. They termed the first category *input criteria* (for instance, monetary investment, physical infrastructure, teaching staff and other human resources), *throughput criteria* (for instance, management processes, allocation of funds, expenditure, staff deployment, teaching and learning, student retention rate, language of learning and teaching (LOLT), teacher in-service training, availability of text books, appropriate teaching and learning methodology), and *output criteria* (for instance, ratio of successful completion of schooling, certification, degree of literacy achieved, and all the societal effects mentioned above).

Contextual Factors

Education system studies typically attend to the contextual, among others, socio-political, factors that shape a system (Steyn 2001). The following is a brief discussion of these shaping factors in the case of the systems of the nations of Southern Africa in this sample.

Geography

Apart from all of these countries being situated at the southern tip of the African continent, and therefore geographically removed from North America and Western Europe, two of the important hubs of international economy, science and educational enterprise, they also feature characteristics that render effective education provision even more difficult than elsewhere: some are landlocked (which even in this ICT age makes for international isolation) and suffer from extreme climates (equatorial, desert and semi-desert).

Demography

The countries of Southern Africa have all experienced a population explosion during the second half of the 20th century (Steyn and Wolhuter 2008). Population growth rates remain positive despite a recent decrease. The annual population growth rates of, for instance, South Africa, Namibia and Swaziland are respectively 1.07%, 2.6% and 1.00%. Since a two percent growth-rate represents a doubling of the population every 35 years, this leads to difficulties in terms of education provision.

Socio-political Conditions

Many of the countries of the region had their quota of civil strife and political turmoil in the run-up to independence (the DRC, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa), while others have since independence been sporadically plagued by violence and turmoil (Lesotho, Swaziland), and still others to the present day have been struggling with this problem (Zimbabwe, DRC). These circumstances are of course not helpful in providing and expanding education.

The societies of Southern Africa are furthermore characterized by high levels of social inequality, in urban areas a lack of social capital, the highest incidence of HIV-AIDS in the world, and a large diversity of cultures (among others, illustrated by a multitude of languages).

Economy

In terms of the World Bank's classification (World Bank 2009), South Africa falls into the category of upper-middle income countries; all the others fall in either the lower-middle income or the low income group.

Technological Development

Information technology infrastructure is weak. In Swaziland, for example, there are 46.2 fixed line telephone subscribers per 1 000 people, 113 mobile telephone subscribers per 1 000 persons, and 36 Internet users per 1 000 persons (Isaacs 2007).

Language

As stated above, the countries of Southern Africa (with the exception of Swaziland and

Lesotho) are linguistically diverse. In the DRC, 700 local languages and dialects are spoken. Only the ex-colonial languages (English and French, and in South Africa Afrikaans) are sufficiently sophisticated to be used as media of teaching at tertiary, secondary, and the higher levels of primary education.

Religion and Philosophy

Missionary activity and colonialism saw to it that the majority of the populations of the countries of Southern African proclaim to be Christians today (World Almanac Education Group 2009). Despite this, the modern Western Liberal individualistic, materialistic and secular philosophy has taken root, and now exists side by side with traditional cultures and their philosophical and value systems (see Turaki 1999).

Overview of the Eight Systems in Question

The foregoing discussion centres on a number of conditions and factors that shaped the education systems of the eight countries. In what follows, the researchers show how the systems developed in several respects from what they were at the time of independence during the 1960s to what they are now. In the process, both the successes and failures of the systems are highlighted.

History of Education

The basis of formal education in Southern Africa was laid by the missionaries, who since the early nineteenth century migrated from Europe into the subcontinent. The education provided by them, however, reached only a tiny percentage of the children (Christie 1991). Furthermore, education was limited to the lower grades of primary education and was of a poor quality (see Fataar 1997; Christie 1991). Education was more for religious than for educational purposes (Pachai 1973).

In the pre-independent era (which commenced during the last three decades of the nineteenth century), the colonial administrations gradually also became involved in the supply of education. The education provided by the colonial masters was just sufficient to train the required numbers of indigenous Africans for their subservient positions in colonial societies and

economies, such as (primary school) teachers, clerks, or interpreters in courts, and for providing the materials and products to be shipped to the mother countries (see Diop 1999).

By the time of independence (c. 1960) very little in terms of secondary or tertiary education had been provided (UNESCO 1961). Botswana – admittedly an extreme case – found itself on Independence Day in 1966 with a total of a mere 22 university graduates and 100 secondary school graduates (Beattie 2009). At primary school level a more serious effort had been made during the closing years of colonial rule, but even universal primary school attendance remained a distant goal (UNESCO 1961). In 1960, on the eve of independence, nearly 70% of children of primary school age were enrolled in school. More than half of all these students, however, were enrolled in the first two grades. Many never went further. About 40% of those enrolled in primary school completed this level of education.

Educational Objectives

After gaining independence, the governments of the new countries launched a serious education expansion drive in which they pursued several intrinsic and external goals (UNESCO 1961). Among the intrinsic goals are the expansion of access to education to all (especially on primary and lower secondary education levels), and equality of educational opportunity. The raising of the quality of education has in recent years been added to this goal (see UNESCO 1998). The external goals they pursued relate to economic and political objectives. The economic objectives entailed the promotion of economic growth and development and the eradication of poverty. In an age (that is, the 1960s) when Schultz's theory of human capital had its heyday (see Sobel 1982), education was widely seen as the key to Africa's development. Regarding political objectives, the newly independent African countries were new entities, each embodying a diversity of cultural groups. Their leaders saw in education a means to forge national unity, and to legitimize the new states and their governments (Thompson 1981). The education system also had to train a cadre of civil servants for the new administrations.

In the subsequent years, these societal goals of education became overshadowed by more in-

dividualistic goals as objectives were rewritten to be more consonant with the creed of human rights of the time. For example, the Education Sector Strategic Plan of Lesotho 2005-2015 (Ministry of Education and Training Lesotho 2004) states that education should be directed at the integral sociological development of the individual – the individual's cognitive development, and development into a full member of the community, a person who cherishes the principles of justice and human rights prescribed by his/her society.

Administration and Management

At the time of independence the weakly developed civil societies, as well as the fact that the omnipotent nation-state, the welfare state and the notion of social engineering were all much in vogue, meant that educational control had to be greatly centralized. In recent times, in line with world trends, education control has been decentralized, however (see Gershberg and Winkler 2003). An exception has been Swaziland, where control of the education system still remains highly centralized (no doubt facilitated by the small size of the country and its demography). Decentralization meant both the delegation of power from centralized to regional/provincial/district authorities, for example, in Malawi to the 34 education districts countrywide; and to individual institutions, such as in South Africa (based on its 1996 Schools Act) and in Namibia.

The administration and management of education in all of these countries are beset with problems. Administration systems tend to be clumsy and inefficient (see Meredith 2005). In countries where management and decision-taking powers have been devolved to individual institutions, contextual factors in those countries result in the problem that it is extremely difficult to involve parents and the community in school matters (see Singh et al. 2004) (giving individual institutions decision making powers presupposes parents to be a key constituency in school governing boards).

For this reason as well as others pertaining to, for instance, religious affiliation, private education institutions have cropped up throughout the region. In Lesotho (where missionaries played a major role in the establishment of school systems) churches still own and operate 90% of schools. In other countries, such as Tanzania,

where anti-Western sentiment saw a drastic curtailment of private schools during the first post-independence phase, a resurgence of private institutions, in the wake of the neo-liberal economic revolution, is currently visible. In the DRC there are no less than 263 private higher education institutions.

Financing Education

With tall orders placed at the door of education (as outlined above under educational objectives), the governments of the newly independent Southern African states threw huge resources at education. Immediately after independence, education rose to the biggest single item on state budgets, generally claiming a quarter of state expenditure (Hawes and Coombe 1984). By the late 1980s to the early 1990s, however, structural adjustment programs that, as a result of deals these countries had to sign with the International Monetary Fund, brought about by a cutback in public educational expenditure – percentage-wise and also in absolute terms (see Campbell and Stein 1992). Expenditure has since reached a low point, but has begun increasing again. In the DRC, for example, the percentage of the state budget allocated to education decreased from 16.85% in 1980 to 3.7% in 1989, and has been increasing again to reach 10% in 1997. Two problems with respect to the education budget are: firstly, the high proportion of the education budget swallowed up by personnel costs (that is, salaries) – typically 90% plus - leaving very little for infrastructure, maintenance and improvement; secondly, the disproportionately high amounts going to secondary and especially tertiary education, despite the small enrolment totals at tertiary level, and despite the fact that primary education has a much higher rate of return than either secondary or tertiary education (World Bank 1988). It should also be added that in recent years private education (especially at higher education level) and non-governmental organisations (especially at basic level) have also come to play a role in the supply of education, thus relieving the burden of governments (see Rose 2009).

Enrolments

In the immediate post-independence years, that is, during the 1960s, enrolments, both in

absolute numbers and ratios, increased spectacularly (admittedly from a small base), no doubt facilitated by the high rates of economic growth (again, from a low base) of the decade. A series of economic crises – the first oil crisis of 1973, the second oil crisis of 1979, the world debt crises of 1982 and of 2008-2010 – have slowed down rates of expansion, although negative growths of enrolment ratios, that is, much lower absolute enrolments, were not recorded. On the platform of the long economic boom of 1990-2008, another cycle of expansion took place, although within the parameters of the structural-adjustment programs (explained above), and therefore not as forceful as the growth phase of the 1960s. The following tables (Tables 1 and 2) show enrolment progress in Tanzania:

At the time of writing it is not yet clear how the economic slump, which set in by 2008, has been affecting enrolment growth. None of the countries has yet attained universal primary education, much less universal secondary education. The gross tertiary enrolment ratio in South Africa is 15%, while in the other countries it is still low, in the single digit percentage level (UNESCO 2010).

Institutional Fabric

The institutional fabric of the education systems of Southern Africa still bears resemblance to that of their erstwhile colonial masters. Neither home-grown models nor the influence of the American 6-6 ladder model (very prominent elsewhere in the third world, especially outside of Africa) can be detected. (South Africa, Swaziland and Namibia and, with respect to primary schools, Zimbabwe too, have, however, changed the names of the levels to grades 1 to 12, as they are called in the United States of America, replacing the British term “standards”).

In the Anglophone countries, such as Zimbabwe and Tanzania, the British (more particularly the Scottish) system is still in use. (It is a 7-4-2 model, that is, 7 years primary, followed by 6 years secondary, consisting of 4 years up to O levels and another 2 years up to A levels.) During the pre-independent era, at a time when go-

Table 2: Enrolments in secondary education, Tanzania

Year	1978	1988	1998	2008
Enrolments	64 192	118 810	226 903	1 222 403

vernment had occupied itself mainly with the education of white South Africans, the imperative in South Africa was to produce an educated, skilled citizenry as fast as possible, dominated by a White egalitarian and mobile society. Towards this end, government evolved a 7-5 ladder, without O- / A-level distinction; in other words with one comprehensive secondary cycle. Heavily under South African influence, Namibia, Swaziland and Lesotho also adopted this modified British version.

Similarly, the DRC education system still bears resemblance to its Belgian template. The duration of primary school education is six years, leading to the *Certificat d'Etudes Primaires* (CEP). Two secondary school types exist. The long cycle (general and technical education) lasts 6 years, leading to the *Diplôme d'Etat de – !'Enseignement Secondaire*. The short cycle (technical and vocational education) lasts up to five years, and leads to the *Brevet de Fin d' Etudes Secondaires* (vocational fields) or the *Diplôme de Fin d' Etudes Secondaires* (technical fields).

Curricula

Curricula also still carry the imprint of pre-independent history, despite stated policy since independence to take thorough account of the African natural and cultural heritage. That this inadequate incorporation of the African heritage (as embodied in for example indigenous knowledge systems) has a detrimental influence on for example education for sustainable development, is clear from the analysis of Breidlid (2009). At least three factors militate against such reform: historical inertia, costs of developing indigenous teaching and learning materials (such as textbooks) and the effect of terminal examinations still being controlled by the ex-colonial power (discussed below).

Table1: Enrolment in primary education, Tanzania

Year	1958	1968	1978	1998	2008
Enrolments	403 401	754 170	2 912 984	4 035 209	6 410 094

Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Ministry of Education Sport and Culture 2004) provides an example of the nature and development of curricula in the region. The primary school curriculum consists of Mathematics, language skills (reading, writing and speaking) in English, Shona and Ndebele (the three official languages of the country), Natural Science, Religious and Moral Education, and Social Science. In the first four years of secondary education, the student chooses eight out of the following subjects (which will in due course be reduced to three A levels):

Sciences:	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics with Chemistry, Integrated Science, Mathematics, Computer Science, Physical Science, Combined Science and Core Science.
Humanities:	Literature in English, Religious Education, Geography and History, Religious and Moral Education, Bible Knowledge and Development Studies.
Commercial subjects:	Principles of Accounts, Commerce, Economics, Typewriting, Shorthand and Computer Studies
Languages:	English, Ndebele, Shona, French, German, Afrikaans, Portuguese and Spanish.
Technical subjects:	Woodwork, Metalwork, Building Studies, Agriculture, Technical Graphics, Fashion, Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Art and Craft and Music.

Teaching Method

Despite policy statements containing modern-day educational concepts, such as student-centred education, co-operative learning, teamwork or constructivist learning, the prevailing education methods (just like the curricula and institutional frameworks) appear to be fossilized, as traditional teacher-dominated education and rote memorization are still regarded as the dominant ways of learning. In 1996, the South African Minister of Education announced a major policy shift from content-based education to outcomes-based education (that is, competency based education), motivated, among others, by the desire to move away from education revolving around teacher-centred classroom tuition

and, on the part of the students, rote memorization (see Welle-Strand 1996; Frencken 1988). Yet fourteen years after this announcement, the ministry has conceded that this policy remains very much a dead letter (Hollands 2010; Jansen, 2010; Matomela 2010; Rademeyer 2010).

Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT)

In the countries of Southern Africa the mother tongue is the LOLT up to the fourth year of schooling; after that it is English or French. However undesirable this is (if it is assumed that ideally the first language should be the LOLT right up to university level), at least on two counts Southern Africa is exemplary for the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. Firstly, Tanzania several decades ago developed Swahili as LOLT for the entire primary school cycle (see Rubagumya 1991). Although in tri-glossian Tanzania, Swahili is by far not the first language of all students this is an improvement on the rest of Anglophone Africa where indigenous African languages are used as LOLT only up to the fourth school year. Secondly, the DRC's use of indigenous languages is also an improvement in this respect, in comparison with the rest of Franco- and Lusophone Africa where – even less desirable than in Anglophone Africa – French or Portuguese is used as LOLT right from day one of the first school year.

Assessment

With respect to assessment an interesting anomaly exists. The education systems of Southern Africa have not only retained the culture of excessive summative evaluation of students inherited from the colonial masters, but have actually strengthened it (see Bray et al. 1986; Kellaghan and Greeney 1992). In the process, they moved towards a position such as what some Far Eastern countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China and South Korea are renowned for. This occurred in a period when the former colonial mother countries were moving away from that practice and began de-emphasizing the final school examinations in line with movements in Western Europe and North America (most states in the United States of America have no public secondary school terminal examination, New York State and California being two exceptions to this rule). In most of the Southern African states, nationally administered examinations occur at the exit points of both the

primary school and the secondary school cycle. Common to all these systems is the Junior Secondary Certificate Examination and the 0-levels examinations. On top of that, Swaziland has national tests at the end of grades 4, 7 and 10 developed by the National Examinations Council, administered by teachers under supervision of head teachers, scored by teachers and submitted to the Examinations Council for moderation. Very conspicuous is the continuous presence of overseas examination bodies (especially the Cambridge Overseas Examination Board). Zimbabwe has since independence switched a number of times between indigenous and British examination bodies, while Namibia, though never ruled by Britain, adopted the Cambridge Examinations (Hoveka 1999). Namibia has, however, made significant strides towards indigenising the secondary school cycle terminal examination: it was localised to some extent in 2006 and will be totally indigenised in 2014 (see Iipingene and Likando 2012). Policies of continuous assessment have been formulated throughout the region, but, insofar as they have been implemented, supplement rather than replace summative assessment practices.

Vocational Education

At independence it was declared that the inherited Eurocentric academic education system should be reformed so as to make education more relevant to the developmental needs of Africa. Not long after gaining independence, as education expansion rates exceeded rates of economic growth, the rise of the spectre of schooled unemployment made the alignment of education and the job market all the more urgent. Southern African countries resultantly devised a variety of strategies. Firstly, as in the case of Swaziland, vocational subjects took quite a prominent place in the entire school curriculum, and were referred to as pre-Vocational Education. Secondly, in the pre-1990 era, small scale experiments with the Soviet Model of poly-technical education took place (where students spend part of their school day working on farms or in factories), for example in a (small) number of schools in Zimbabwe during the early 1980s. Thirdly, schools were turned into production units, such as the Brigades project in Botswana. National Youth Service Schemes were launched by governments in, among others, Mozambique, Botswana, Zam-

bia and Malawi (but never implemented). Then there was the extensive, nation-wide "Education for Self-Reliance" project in Tanzania in 1967: an act of social engineering, as part of the *Ujamaa*-project, entailing the herding of the entire nation into Maoist-type rural settlements/co-operative farms (Campbell 1992). After 1990, more Western-type models followed. South African legislation at the beginning of the 21st century made provision for a system of dual education and training (in which government and employers assumed co-responsibility for education and training), based on the German model, while Namibian legislation provided for Community Skills Development Centres. Private sector initiatives (including workplace training) and institutions of higher education (such as the Polytechnic in Namibia (see Wolhuter 2008) and the Community Colleges in Zimbabwe (see Mpondi 2009)) also play a role in the supply of vocational education and training. Despite all these measures, all the countries in the region experienced schooled unemployment as a growing problem.

Higher Education

The development of higher education in Southern Africa more or less went the same route as that of education in general, as outlined above. With the exception of South Africa, at independence, this level of education remained either wafer-thin or totally absent (see Coombs 1985). Zimbabwe had one university only, the DRC three, and the others had no (independent and autonomous) universities. While the 1960s saw a swift increase in enrolments, the first decades of independence saw inappropriate governmental interference in the affairs of universities in the country. Higher education was also plagued (as it is still today) by budgetary problems caused by insufficient funds, inconsistency in budget allocation, and the multiplicity of decision-making centres involved in budget management. The prolonged economic boom of 1990-2008 made possible another expansion phase of higher education, and both enrolments and the number of higher education institutions rocketed. Both Zimbabwe and Tanzania progressed from one university each to seven universities each. Between 2003 and 2008, the number of university students in Malawi almost doubled – by no means an atypical case in the region. In 1985, there were 40 878 university students in the DRC. Eleven years

later, in 1996, this figure had more than doubled to 93 266. The post-1990 growth spurt in higher education was made possible by the proliferation of private higher education institutions. Private universities now are responsible for the enrolment of 12.4% of all university students in Malawi (Chimombo 2010). According to a World Bank study there are already more than 100 private universities (complementing the 200 public universities) in Africa (Materu 2007).

Teacher Education

The swift rate of expansion of education since the attainment of independence necessitated the giving of attention to the expansion of teacher education capacity. In the DRC, teacher education takes place in normal schools and in teacher education colleges and universities. The first two of these institutional types mainly train teachers for primary schools, while secondary school teacher education increasingly gravitates to universities. South Africa, and from 2011 Namibia as well, are the only countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where universities are the exclusive site for teacher education for all levels. In catering for rapid primary school enrolment increases, Tanzania (1974), Zimbabwe (first years after independence) and Malawi at present have all experimented with a teacher education program with secondary school graduates, giving them a one-term residential training, then placing them in primary schools under supervision as teachers, allowing them to complete their teacher education by means of distance education and weekend/vocational seminars. Another initiative was the Basic Education and Teacher Diploma (BETD) programme instituted in the teacher training colleges of Namibia (although this programme will now also be phased out with the incorporation of the teacher training colleges into the University of Namibia). The unique feature of the BETD has been that it educated teachers to be critical reflective practitioners (see Amukugo et al. 2010). There is also the Teacher Training in Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) project, a UNESCO approved project of training teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa by means of distance education. The DRC and Swaziland, for example, have also plugged into this program. Yet despite all these initiatives, the countries of southern Africa report teacher shortages. In Swaziland, in 2010, the annual

teacher education output was not enough to replace the teacher attrition due to death, retirement or resignation, let alone supply teachers for the new posts arising from enrolment growth. With the exception of Swaziland, none of the countries provide continuous professional development (CPD) programs (though all of them have such CPD policies). Finally, a brain drain is putting stress on the teacher supply. This problem is especially acute in Zimbabwe. In 2007, some 25 000 teachers left the country, mainly to South Africa. Another problem is that in-service teacher education is very underdeveloped, and in the case of especially rural teachers, virtually inaccessible in as far as few opportunities exist at national level (Buckler 2011).

Adult Literacy

Given that at independence large numbers of adults were illiterate, governments of the newly independent Southern African countries have devoted attention to the alphabetization of the adult population. Some states, such as Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, already had adult literacy projects. In the 1970s, Tanzania had an adult literacy campaign mobilizing the entire nation (including its school children). This campaign has been widely hailed as one of the three exemplary adult literacy campaigns in world history, the other two being the Cuban Adult Literacy Campaign of 1961 and the 1980 Nicaraguan National Adult Literacy Crusade (Armove 1982). Nowadays more Western-type models are followed (as will be illustrated with the example of Malawi), although Paolo Freire's liberation pedagogy still appeals (as can be illustrated with the Malawian example: the Government of Malawi has established the National Adult Literacy Program, which by 2006 had already reached 860 000 people. Another effort in Malawi is REFLECT (Regenerated Freirèan Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques), using as the name indicates, Freirèan methods).

Despite all these efforts, Southern Africa still has huge numbers of illiterate adults. To return to the example of Malawi, only 64% of adults are literate: 21% of the population of the DRC never had any schooling whatsoever. Only 26.6% of females over the age of 15 went to secondary school. For males, the corresponding percentage is 48.19%

Issues and Problems

In spite of the expansion and reform of education since independence, education in Southern Africa still faces a litany of problems and challenges. Internal efficiency is low. In Swaziland, for example, the completion rate of basic education (primary and junior secondary education) stands at 30% (UNESCO 2010). Input quality is low, for reasons explained under financial constraints. In Zimbabwe, the student: text book ratio is 5:1 in rural schools and 2:1 in urban schools. Output quality is resultantly low. In rural parts of the Eastern Province of South Africa, secondary school terminal examinations have pass rates of only 33%. The global dimensions of educational inequality: gender, socio-economic

gradient, are all visible in southern Africa – and very pronounced so.

REFLECTION

Although it is difficult to compare the eight systems with one another or with systems elsewhere in the world, it is possible to highlight a few trends with regard to progress (or not) that emerged from our investigations. The achievements and failures of the education systems in Southern Africa during the past five decades can arguably best be summarized in Table 3.

The researchers commenced this paper by contending that while Southern African states have made significant strides in the reform and expansion of education since they gained inde-

Table 3: The achievements and failures of the education systems of southern Africa in the period 1960 to 2010

<i>Achievements</i>	<i>Failures</i>
<i>Input</i>	<i>Input</i>
Allocation of up to 25% of budgets	Several economic slumps have inhibited education expenditure; several budgetary cutbacks; weak national economies
Greater access to education for all	Unable to fully make up for lost time and opportunities under colonialism
Education opportunities significantly expanded	Historical backlogs a serious hindrance Having to work from a small base inherited from missionary and colonial education Not all children reached due to inadequate national infrastructure
<i>Throughput</i>	<i>Throughput</i>
Greater decentralization of control (with notable exceptions)	Administrations inexperienced and clumsy
Expansion of teacher education	Failure to involve parents and broader community in education
Increase in student enrolments at all levels	Too much spent on salaries and infrastructure; too little on actual education
Presence and work of examination boards ensure good standard of	Great expenditure on secondary and tertiary education to the detriment of primary education, where greatest return could have been registered
	education Serious brain-drain of teaching staff No home-grown school models; emulation of foreign / mother country models
<i>Output</i>	<i>Output</i>
Efforts at attaining better quality education	Education not yet properly aligned to the socio-economic needs of the country
Better trained cadre of civil servants	The increase in the numbers of private schools indicative of failure of state schools
More attention to the needs of individuals and to their membership of broader entities (their communities; interest of the nation)	Tertiary output not yet satisfactory; tertiary education system still 'wafer-thin' (with exceptions)
Growth in tertiary education	Schooled unemployment has become an insidious problem
Growth in the number of literate adults	Curricula still imprints of those of the mother countries Teaching methods largely outdated (outcomes-based education in South Africa enjoys mixed success and replaced with a more 'traditional' curriculum) With few exceptions, the languages of colonial masters still the LOLTs Assessment still according to the colonial style and model Gross (gender and socio-economic status) inequalities still present

pendence in the 1960s, they still face formidable challenges. These could be related to contextual factors influencing the provision of education, especially demographic factors (rapid population increase), socio-economic issues (the fact that the countries have not yet developed to the level of being in the league of developed countries, hence poverty is widespread and socio-economic disparities large, all rendering difficult the supply of quality education to all) and to the fact that the first language of most people has not yet been developed to languages of learning and teaching at all levels of education. This contention seems to be vindicated by the summary in Table 3, albeit that the summary reflects a number of generalizations (there are notable exceptions to virtually every item in the Table). While considerable resources have been invested in education and while an impressive enrolment expansion has been accomplished since the advent of independence, the historical backlogs (dating from pre-independence times) have not totally overcome. Economic austerity measures, brought about by Structural Adjustment Agreements have also hampered the expansion of education. Raising the quality of education remains a serious challenge, as does the alignment of education with employment opportunities. Nevertheless, based on our analysis and discussion of the systems of the eight countries, as reflected in the Table, the failures of these systems seem to outweigh the progress that has been made during the last five decades. At the same time it must be said that these systems have made significant strides in shrugging off their pre-independence past and heritages.

The rectification of the problems and shortcomings that these countries and their education systems are confronted with demands complex solutions. Since space constraints prevent us from offering detailed advice, it can only be suggested that a practical strategy to address these challenges should at the very least contain measures such as: possible curtailment of population growth combined with improvement of health services, still greater access to education combined with improved quality of education, curtailment of the teacher brain-drain combined with improved teacher education, more efficient use of monetary expenditure (larger budgetary allocations to education are not deemed viable) combined with greater interstate cooperation within the SADC region, also with

regard to education (exchanges of curricula, teachers, resources), better alignment of education with the world of work combined with improvement of industry infrastructure for combating schooled unemployment, updating of teaching methods, and expansion of tertiary education, especially teacher education.

CONCLUSION

Strategic attention by education policy makers in these eight countries to what the researchers listed in the right-hand column of Table 3 will go a long way towards addressing the insidious problems of these systems. The potential is there; it just needs further impetus, both in terms of monetary resources and the creativity of all involved.

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