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Final Report

**EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: CHALLENGES FOR
RESEARCH, POLICY-MAKING AND PRACTICE**

A ROUND TABLE SEMINAR REPORT

prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

On May 19, 1992, a one day round table seminar was held in Ottawa, at the IDRC headquarter, on the following topic: EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: CHALLENGES FOR RESEARCH, POLICY-MAKING AND PRACTICE. Co-sponsored by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the University of Ottawa, the meeting was attended by twenty-four Canadian and African participants engaged in education in Sub-Saharan Africa at different levels: policy-makers, researchers, practitioners or donor agencies. In addition, two people attended the meeting as observers. Appendix A presents the list of the participants and the observers.

This report describes the seminar proceedings. It also summarizes the points and comments that were raised which could be helpful to the sponsors and the participants as well as to the whole community of researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and donor agencies involved in education in Africa.

The WHY of the seminar

For thirty years, the issue of education has been of particular attention in Third World development including Sub-Saharan Africa. Education was believed to be not only a profitable investment but also the key to development.

Like other donor agencies, the IDRC has done a substantial work in education in Sub-Saharan Africa and is expected to continue doing so. However, in recent years the role of education in the development process is being reviewed in the light of past mistakes and increasingly limited resources.

In this context, to optimize its educational interventions, the IDRC is now going through a process of restructuration which implies substantial changes in terms of the orientations of its programmes, and the redefinition of its work at regional level. The success of such a process requires that input be obtained not only from IDRC representatives in the field but also from its other actual or potential partners in education, such as policy-makers, practitioners, NGOs, NGIs and other donor agencies dealing with development issues in Sub-Saharan Africa. This means that input in terms of first hand information is needed from these key players or their representatives.

Therefore, the purpose of the seminar was for the IDRC officers to collect, on education in general and particularly on educational research, as many opinions and ideas as possible and from the perspectives of different key players in African education: policy-makers (ministry officials), donor agency officials, practitioners, researchers. In his introductory remarks, Dr Daniel Morales-Gomez of the IDRC summarized it this way:

"The primary purpose of the seminar is for us at the IDRC to listen to you and to learn from you. We are in the process of policy definition for our programmes and we believe that this meeting can help us in deciding what directions the IDRC should take within education in Africa in the future."

The problems addressed by the seminar

The over-riding theme of the seminar was the role of educational research as a means of policy-making in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the seminar was structured around three main sub-themes or sessions: (1) Dynamics and Directions of Educational Changes in Sub-Saharan Africa, (2) Educational Research Capacity Building in Sub-Saharan Africa and (3) Issues of Collaboration and Partnership. Nevertheless, given the complexity of educational issues, the speakers were not totally confined by the proposed themes. They were allowed to speak about any other subject in its inter-relation with educational issues.

The HOW of the seminar

The seminar was somewhat informal and structured in a questions and answers dialogue format. Each of the three sessions had a chairperson and four designated speakers among the participants. It is worth noting that many of these speakers spoke from their real positions while others (a few) were somewhat role playing.

The chairperson had to elaborate briefly on the theme of the session and then to close up with a question to which each speaker tried to answer from the perspective of the key player he/she was or was representing. The whole seminar was taped. This report is based on the transcripts of the tapes and the author's notes taken during the seminar.

The three main sub-themes of the seminar constitute the main chapters of the report. All the chapters, except the fourth one which is a concluding chapter, are presented in a similar format:

- a) Chairperson's background presentation: summary and the underlying question;
- b) Points raised by each speaker;
- c) Comments and questions raised during the discussion;
- d) Concluding remarks and summary.

CHAPTER I DYNAMICS AND DIRECTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

1.1 CHAIRPERSON'S BACKGROUND PRESENTATION: SUMMARY AND THE UNDERLYING QUESTION (Chairperson: Sibry Tapsoba)

During the past three decades, the expansion of investment in education in Sub-Saharan Africa has been phenomenal. Since the independence decade (the sixties), the conception of education as a capital investment with a high rate of return both to society and to individual has allowed the education sector to grow more rapidly than most African economies.

After three decades of rapidly increasing expenditure on education, the results achieved have not matched the high expectations. The purely quantitative expansion of educational opportunities has had no notable effect on the elimination of poverty, of unemployment and of socio-economic inequity. In many countries, educational crisis has been worsening day after day.

Such a situation can be attributed at least to three factors. First, education was believed to be the one and only determinant of development. Many other environmental factors, which affect the educational process, have been ignored.

Second, the large community of ordinary people has been marginalized within the education process. Third, the inequity of the international economic order and inflation in World prices which have contributed to the impoverishment of African countries.

Such a state of affairs called for deep changes both in educational practice and in the theoretical orientation of the educational process.

- o Given that governments, which have been up to now exclusive financiers, organizers and providers of educational opportunities, have been less and less able to fulfil their duties in this regard, there has been an increasing call, a need for the community as a whole to assume responsibility in the education process.
- o The need for curriculum re-orientation and teaching methods adaptation has emerged as the result of the inadequacy between educational system and societal needs.
- o Given that educational reforms have been planned and implemented in many African countries, without significant impact on the educational practice, the need for rethinking the educational model in use has become a must.

From this brief review of the educational situation, the following key question was asked to the speakers: What have been and/or what should be the implications of educational research on these needed changes in education in Africa ?

1.2 POINTS RAISED BY THE SPEAKERS

Four speakers made their presentations from different perspectives. These can be summarized as follows.

1.2.1 From an African Academic perspective (Daniel Sifuna)

The role of African Academics (AA) in contributing to changes and development for the future in Africa is a difficult one. Up to now, the AA has been blamed for being part of ivory tower mentality, indifferent to the problems of the suffering masses and more concerned with his/herself, engaged exclusively in academic research for his/her own academic promotion. This is a reality that cannot totally be denied and whose explanation lies on two categories of factors: academic and socio-economic constraints. On one hand, as an academic, he/she faces the crucial dilemma of "Publish or Perish" (PP). To keep his/her job, he/she is supposed to be academically productive. So, his/her attempt to engage more in academic research is justified by his/her survival need as a professional researcher.

On the other hand, as an individual, he/she faces the problem of harsh socio-economic and political crisis. Having to cope him/herself with increasingly harsh living conditions, he/she does not have enough time for research. Consequently, there is little room left for non-academic research.

Nevertheless, it appears clearly that, within the present crisis, change has become a must in the AA's particular perspective. In his/her role of knowledge generator and disseminator, he/she has to play a new and more dynamic role in development. He/she will have to engage in both academic and development related research. For this to happen, other factors that affect AA's professional and individual living conditions have to be eliminated or minimized.

If conditions are going to be made so that the AA can operate effectively, there are two important research areas which, if properly addressed, can make a difference. One concerns the factors or forces that affect the educational process although they are external to the sector. Within this area, in terms of research the AA will have to look at issues like:

- o Population growth and poor cultural policies;
- o External debt and structural imbalances;
- o Wage policies, poor nutrition and drug abuse;
- o Civil war and refugees problems, etc.

The other area concerns the problems that affect educational process and which are internal to the sector. Research directly related to the educational sector will have to address issues like:

- o Demobilization of increasingly diminishing resources:
How do we allocate the scarce resources to different sectors and within the educational sector ?
- o Declining enrolment: What internal factors can help improve the enrolment rate ?
- o Teaching-learning conditions: What internal factors can help improve teaching-learning conditions ?
- o Quality of education: How can quality of education be improved ?
- o Teaching materials: What appropriate teaching materials should be used to improve the quality of learning ?

Summary. The African academic (AA), who has been concerned mainly with academic research for his/her own academic promotion, turned to be aware of the more complex role he/she has to play to contribute to development in general and to educational development in particular. He/she has to supply a variety of quality information. This will be made possible if some of his/ her working and living conditions are improved.

1.2.2 From a donor agency perspective (Mejomo Coulibaly)

Donor agencies recognize that research can contribute to the solution of the educational crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa. They do favour the research networking approach, both at national and regional levels, not only to deal with present educational crisis but also to anticipate for the future.

Nevertheless, they believe that, in dealing with education and educational research issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, at least four important aspects need to be considered and addressed. The first aspect concerns priority definition. Instead of continually blaming donor agencies for imposing their own research agendas, African countries themselves should begin by identifying and clearly defining their own educational strategic areas and then their research priorities. Such education and educational research agendas should be well articulated within national development plans, in a regional integration perspective.

The second aspect relates to the project effect persistence and the project multiplier effect. Many projects that have been funded have rarely had long lasting effects on educational systems. In many cases, even when projects have been highly effective and successful, their effects remain only as long as external support is given.

So, African educational researchers should try to find ways of maintaining and multiplying positive project effects beyond foreign support.

Third, project funding mechanisms. It is important that financial responsibilities of each educational partner - local government, donor agency, supporting NGO, local community and the recipient institution - be clearly defined and assumed. Besides new funding resources, new funding mechanisms or alternatives to foreign financing support should be sought, locally, nationally and regionally.

The fourth aspect concerns the usefulness and the practicality of educational research. Donor agencies believe that educational research in Africa tends to be more theoretical, more geared towards confirming existing theories than solving current educational problems. They urge African educational researchers to realize that what is needed at this stage is immediate usable knowledge and skills for decision-making and educational problem solving.

Without denying the usefulness of theoretical research, donor agencies give top priority to applied research, to research related to current problems in educational systems.

"Ce qui interesse les bailleurs de fonds et les décideurs politiques, Mr Coulibaly said, ce sont les éléments de solutions aux problèmes concrets qui se posent dans les systèmes éducatifs."

1.2.3 From the practitioner's perspective (W. T. Wamani)

Practitioners (teachers) are strongly interested in micro-level research. This means that from their point of view, research as a tool for education development should address day to day classroom and school running problems. Within this perspective, research will address issues like:

- o The issue of knowledge and skills delivery system that will be appropriate to induce changes;
- o The minimum packages of knowledge and skills required to enable children to survive in society with a minimum level of dignity; or
- o The essential knowledge and skills children need to survive in their society;
- o What essential skills and knowledge a teacher needs to be an effective change agent ?
- o Teacher's characteristics that enhance his/her effectiveness;

- o What will be the appropriate training level for an effective primary and secondary school teacher ?
- o What kind of incentive should be used to boost teacher's morale ?
- o The effective ways of transferring the learned knowledge and skills from classroom to living situations;
- o The appropriate method that will maximize the acquisition of required knowledge and skills;
- o The research methodology the teacher can engage in within the classroom to facilitate change;
- o The outside classroom activities that can help to enhance learning process;
- o What equipment do we need to teach effectively ?
- o How can the teacher do without traditional teaching materials ?
- o How to develop teacher's creativity ?
- o Administrator's and supervisor's activities that can help enhance learning process;
- o How to teach and develop learning to learn ability ?
- o What classroom size effective teaching-learning interaction requires ?
- o Management of huge-number-student classrooms;
- o How to teach and help to develop higher-order thinking skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and reasoning ?

1.2.4 From a government officer perspective (Christine Ouedraogo)

The issue examined here was the educational reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in French speaking countries. Three aspects were considered: the reason for educational reforms, issues considered within educational reforms, and the why of educational reforms failure.

Why educational reforms were undertaken ?

For many Sub-Saharan African countries, the root of educational reforms lies on many factors. Some of them are:

- o Growing demand for school places versus growing cost of education;
- o Elitist schooling system: little or no schooling is provided to half or more of school age children;
- o Schooling is dispersed on a highly discriminatory basis, favoring urban males and wealthy people;
- o Irrelevance of the curriculum for emerging social and economic needs;
- o Neglect of technical and vocational courses;
- o Growing problem of educated unemployment, frequently co-existing with shortages in certain specialized fields;

- o Wastage, in terms of high rates of failure, repeaters and drop-outs;
- o Exceeding inefficiency reflected by low completion rates;
- o Declining quality at all levels of education, meaning that those who completed their education cycle have learned very little.

Some issues dealt with by educational reforms

In many countries reforms addressed issues like:

- o Democratization, in terms of enlarged access;
- o Unit cost reducing;
- o Relevance of education systems and curriculum content in regard to socio-cultural and economic needs;
- o Linkages between education and productive work;
- o National languages as education vehicle;
- o Flexible systems in terms of automatic promotion, at least at some levels of the elementary school;
- o Craft centres, and curriculum "ruralization";
- o Efficiency: in terms of providing more pupils with a minimum basic education (high completion rates);
- o Effectiveness, in terms of completers having acquired essential and usable knowledge and skills;

The Why of educational reforms failure

Educational reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in French speaking countries, did not work for many reasons.

First, organizational barriers. By organizational barriers it was meant the fact that social, cultural and economic needs are not identified and defined; the fact that educational goals and objectives are not defined or are ill-defined; and when they are well defined, they are not taken into account in terms of resources allocation; the fact that education staff, teachers and education officers, are not trained to support education reforms; the fact that educational reforms are conceived for but without the people.

Second, administrative barriers. These are essentially factors such as bureaucratization of the system; overcentralization: up-down style of decision-making.

Third, philosophical factors. One of philosophical barriers is the lack of educational model. There is no answer to the question of what type of citizen the education system should produce. The other philosophical barrier is that there is a gap between what the reforms propose to society and what society expects from a school system (the perception of education on the part of society, the public).

Fourth, structural factor. Graduates from reformed systems do not always find opportunities to be utilized according to the way they have been trained.

Fifth, political instability. As governments and ministries change too often, with each change of government or ministry comes a change in plans and programs. There is a constant turnover of government officials at all levels.

From the presenter's point of view, it is a big mistake to believe that we can solve all the economic, social, cultural and political problems through education alone. Changes are not to be expected from educational interventions alone, no matter how good and how effective they are and how strongly they are based on educational research.

1.3 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS RAISED DURING THE DISCUSSION

Of all the comments and questions raised during the discussion period, the most important are the following.

a) African Academics' basic motivation for research

One of the realities that have been recognized is the African academics' primary motivation for research: their own academic promotion and the search for (international) peer approval.

Nevertheless, according to some comments, under some conditions it takes more than financial or promotional incentive to be really involved in research. For instance, for some individuals, the high interest for research has been found to be a stronger motivator than financial and promotional concerns.

b) Theoretical versus applied research: a false opposition

For some participants, the contradiction between theoretical and applied research, between research for knowledge advancement and utilitarian research, is a false one. Third World countries need both applied research as well as theoretical research. These two types of research are not an either/or choice. They are complementary to one another.

If there is a problem, it should be one of dosage between the two kinds of research, or one of priority ranking. And this does not mean that theoretical research should be excluded.

c) African Academics' ability to publish

No matter what kind of research they engage in, theoretical or applied research, African academics do not publish enough to meet the need. But the situation is particularly worse in the case of applied and development-oriented, problem-oriented research.

However, theoretical research should not be accused of impeding applied research. Some of the reasons given for the lack of applied research in education are:

- o There is no demand for research on the part of governments; governments are almost coerced by donor agencies to ask for research.
- o Inadequacy of African Academics' training. Their training is more theory-oriented than problem solving oriented. Mainly trained abroad, they are more adaptative than innovative/creative, more extrovert than locally oriented.
- o Lack of time. Academics in Africa are involved both in struggle for life and in day to day university running activities: teaching huge number of students, planning, meetings, committee and sub-committee activities. So, there is no time left for research, especially problem-oriented research. In many Sub-Saharan African countries, Academics are in a context of survival. They hold two to three jobs to make a living wage. This exacerbates the lack of time.

d) Pace in research process versus urgent development problems

Research by African academics is accused of taking too much time. On one hand, development problems are notably urgent and decisions are to be taken as quick as possible; on the other hand, solid research takes time to come to fruition. In this context, African academics are expected to anticipate research problems, to conduct research anticipatively, so that findings can be available when problems arise in the vital space of practical affairs.

e) Research findings application

Another point that has been raised is the fact that, in some countries, applied research findings pile in the ministry of education and are never looked at, whereas decisions are taken without any consideration for related research findings.

f) Education and indigenous knowledge

Everyone has ordinary knowledge, also called indigenous knowledge. Everyone has it, uses it and offers it. This is true for every human being, including ordinary Africans. Of course ordinary knowledge is not homogenous.

Some ordinary knowledge is more reliable, probably more true than others. Social problem solving heavily relies on good ordinary knowledge. With this in mind, an observer asked the following question:

What has been done, in terms of educational research, to identify, to validate and to integrate the African indigenous knowledge into the education system ? What has been done, in terms of educational research, to integrate the culture of the African society into the educational system ? The answer never came.

h) Limits of education system as a development driving force

There are limits, a participant said, to what education and educational research can do in the struggle for development. Education is a sub-system within the whole society system which includes social, economic, political ... sub-systems, acting at local, national, regional and international levels. If it is true that education is a prerequisite to development, it is not the missing piece of the development puzzle. As a part of the whole, education and educational research are necessary but not sufficient conditions for development. They become driving forces of development only when they are integrated in an overall development policy whereby every sub-system adequately plays its own part,

where all the sub-systems are complementary to one another and when they are implemented in a favorable national and international setting. This does not mean that nothing is to be done in the educational sector. Rather this highlights the need to keep that reality in mind when criticizing the education and educational research sub-system.

i) Education system in Botswana: A model ?

The point made by professor Hopkin (from Botswana) can be cited to illustrate the above statement. According to Mr Hopkin, the context of aid in education and educational research is very important for their success or failure. Like many other developing countries, since its independence Botswana has been receiving aid to develop its education system. According to donor agencies, aid invested in education and educational research in Botswana is now paying off and Botswana is turning away aid. The explanation given by Mr Hopkin for the success of Botswana education system lies on three factors:

- o Economic stability: relative good business atmosphere;
- o Political stability: few change at political level;
- o Corruption is held at minimum level. When compared to many other African countries, Botswana is, Mr Hopkin said, relatively an uncorrupted country.

j) **Science and technology research versus non-science and non-technology research**

Research on culture is not valued and not funded by donor agencies. To get funded, researchers have to go into research on science and technology. For instance, it is almost impossible for researchers in linguistics, in cultural aspects of the curriculum to get funded. Such a situation hampers not only curriculum reforms but also the social issues of education. This is the same for any qualitative research which is used in many educational investigations. How can we expect the school system to respond to society needs if this kind of research is not encouraged ?

k) **Education and educational research priorities setting**

The question of who determines priorities in education and educational research arose several times during the discussion. From the debate, two levels of authority are involved in this process, with the first often being the most determining because of the weight of its financial input: donor agencies, and decision-makers or politicians. However a point was made to justify the tight control by donor agencies of the priorities definition process: often African politicians fail to determine their own agendas, so they only adopt the agendas of donor agencies.

As for African academics, educational researchers and practitioners as well as community, it appeared that they have no input in this process.

1) Development-oriented educational research: some conditions

Problem-oriented educational research will have implications on changes under several conditions, of which the most important are:

- o The need for the research to be integrated to the community where the problem arose, meaning that those people need to be involved in the research priority identification and research objectives definition.
- o The need for the research to be conducted within the context where the problem arose.
- o The need for research findings to be not only published and disseminated (among peers), but also popularized (translated from scientific to professional document and made financially affordable for practitioners who can use them).

m) African educational researchers: a need for trust

In some cases, African educational researchers feel untrusted by both national governments and donor agencies.

On one hand, instead of using local expertise, national governments, for no evident reasons, prefer bringing in experts from outside to do research on education. On the other hand, when they fund research projects in a country, donor agencies also bring in foreign experts, even if they can locally find highly qualified people, trained abroad and often whose training were funded by them.

1.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUMMARY

For educational research to have impact on changes, four areas of intervention emerged from the presentations and the discussion: the general situation; the African academics; the donor agencies and the governments or decision-makers.

A. General situation

- a) The importance of education and educational research in the process of bringing changes should be recognized;
- b) The complexity of education and educational research needs to be taken into account;
- c) For educational research to have any impact on changes in education, African educational researchers will have to play a more complex role..

- d) The need for all educational players, including grass-root players, to be involved in the process of educational priorities definition, education and educational research goals and objectives definition;
- e) The need for education and educational research priorities to be articulated with and integrated into an over-all national development plan;
- f) The need for diversifying funding mechanisms in education and educational research process;
- g) The need for educational research as development tool to address day to day practical problems in education;
- h) The working and living conditions of African academics that affect their productivity need to be dealt with;
- i) The need to reconcile and not to oppose applied and theoretical research;
- j) The need to recognize that educational problems are often due to non-educational factors;
- k) The paradox of the need for quick answers to development problems and the time-consuming character of good research;
- l) The need for African academics to anticipate research problems and to anticipatively conduct investigations on them before they arise;
- m) The need for research findings to be published, disseminated and popularized.

B. African academics

African academics were blamed in the following issues:

- a) They do not publish enough and when they do, their publications are theory-oriented instead of being problem-oriented;
- b) Their primary motivation for publishing concerns their own academic promotion and (international) peer approval;
- c) They are not innovative/creative enough in terms of research, although development problems ask for creative research;
- d) They are not interested in research on indigenous knowledge that should be validated and integrated into the education system;
- e) Their research process lasts too long while answers to development problems are quickly needed.

C. Donor agencies

Donor agencies were blamed for the following aspects:

- a) They impose their education and educational research agendas;

- b) They prioritize science and technology research and are unwilling to fund non-science and non-technology research projects;
- c) They do not trust local experts, not even those whose training abroad was funded by them;

D. Governments or decision-makers

- a) They are towed by donor agencies in many educational issues and do not effectively play their decision-making role;
- b) They fail to determine their own agendas in education and educational research process;
- c) They do not trust national experts and prefer bringing in foreign experts;
- d) They do not demand for research and are forced by donor agencies to do so;
- e) They do not respect educational priorities, in terms of resources allocation;
- f) They do not always recognize African academics' role as change agents;
- g) They are exclusively engaged in and concerned with short-term political interests.

Chapter II EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

2.1 CHAIRPERSON'S BACKGROUND PRESENTATION: SUMMARY AND THE UNDERLYING QUESTION. (Chairperson: Kabiru Kinyanjui)

In the last ten years, the concept of capacity building (CB) has become very fashionable. It has been widely used in many fields: in management, economics, agriculture and health... Yet there is in Africa a major initiative by donors called African Capacity Building Initiatives (ACBI), and a foundation to deal with these initiatives has been established in Harare (Zimbabwe), with the World Bank as the major force behind the project.

For African academics, this new concept or the use of this old concept in educational research area raises a serie of questions that should stimulate thinking and retain attention during such a seminar. The following are some of them:

- o How does CB in education or educational research differ from training and manpower development which tended to be dominant in the sixties and the seventies ?
- o How does CB in educational research lead to other kinds of capacity which are required for implementation of educational changes and for management of changes ?

- o How can CB in educational research enable communities, NGOs and other players who, in the past, have been in the periphery of the education system, to get involved in education and in management of educational changes ?
- o How does the concept of CB lead to capacity utilization (CU) ?
- o What does CU mean and what are its mechanisms ?
- o How can we sustain capacity within society ?
- o What kind of competence is needed for researchers to be capacity building agents in education ?
- o How can CB strengthen researchers' environment, which has been increasingly dominated by outsiders and the donors community, so that research priorities and research agendas can be set by the main players and those who are affected by the educational system in their national context ?
- o In the context of CB in educational research, don't we need to go beyond just carrying the research and disseminating its findings to incorporate into its mechanisms for utilization of these findings ?
- o Isn't there a need to build linkages between universities and users of research findings as part of CB ?

- o What advocacy part can researchers play so that they are not just knowledge generators and disseminators but also activists in communicating that knowledge and getting it utilized ?

According to the chairperson there is in the context of CB, a need to criticize and to question the project approach favored by donor agencies which creates an illusion of capacity building. Projects operate under artificial conditions, with funds, easy access to ministers, to foreign exchanges, to equipments, books and other kinds of valuables. As long as these artificial conditions are maintained, things go right and this creates an illusion of capacity being created. But, once they move out, along with all these conditions, there is no capacity left.

Also needs to be raised, within CB process, the ability of available capacity to innovate, to be creative, to challenge the existing ideas coming from the outside through the donors' mechanisms, through oversea's training or through colonial heritage. The background presentation ended with a two-fold question addressed to the speakers:

- a) What does CB mean in educational research in the present context of Africa ?
- b) How is it implemented and practiced by the various players ?

2.2 POINTS RAISED BY THE SPEAKERS

2.2.1 From African academics' perspective (Anna Katahore, Makerere University)

Five components of CB emerged from African academics' perspective. First of all, there is a human resource development (HRD) dimension. Building capacity in educational research requires that human resources be developed; that professional researchers at senior level be trained. There is a need to train people who can design and carry out research in terms of creating new knowledge, people who can train and supervise junior researchers as well as stimulate and sustain an inquiring mind of research, a critical analysis spirit in society as a whole and in the community of junior researchers.

The second component of CB in educational research is the utilization of senior researchers who are currently located in Africa. Expatriate consultants are being brought to the continent while national and regional experts with the same competence are being underutilized. As part of CB in educational research, there should be a full utilization of already existing researchers at the national and regional levels.

The third component deals with developing and sustaining an infrastructure for research in African countries. At the moment, the research infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa is very fragile.

Thus, capacity building in educational research implies that strong and permanent infrastructures are established for research and analysis in African countries. This means that staff, physical and technical facilities, libraries and data bases are needed as part of CB.

The fourth dimension concerns the evolving of research framework and methods appropriate to African context. Most of educational designs and methodologies currently being used are based on priorities and conditions which were developed in particular contexts, generally in the West. African CB in educational research requires not only that those Western models of framework, research designs and methodologies be adapted to local context, but also that new ones dealing specifically with local current problems be evolved.

The fifth component deals with developing mechanisms for promoting demands for research, promoting research findings dissemination and utilization. On one hand, if there is no demand for research, perhaps it is because people do not realise how useful research findings can be for them, in their day to day work. There is a need to stimulate research demands from those who may need it.

On the other hand, there is no use doing research, be it applied or not, if research findings cannot be made available to those who need them either for decision-making or for day to day problem solving.

Research in Africa has no major impact on policy-making, on how practitioners go about their daily work. This is partly because little attention has been paid to developing mechanisms for dissemination and use of research findings. So mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that educational players know how research can help in their daily work, what research findings are available and how they can get them and use them in solving their daily problems.

2.2.2 From NGO perspective (Yaya Mede Moussa, ASTED, Benin)

In the context of CB, there are reasons, and there is room for NGOs in educational research in Sub-Saharan Africa. First, generally speaking, research infrastructures in the higher education institutions are fragile. And research activities are kept at minimum level in most fields. Second, on one hand, official research institutions (the universities) in French speaking Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in former French colonies, have no faculties of education.

On the other hand, non-university high education institutions such as "Ecoles Normales Supérieures" (ENS), which ought to play an active part in educational research, are not interested in or have no time for educational research. Consequently, educational research has little or no room in these two types of higher education institution.

Third, institutions that have been created with a mandate to be in charge of educational research, such as "l'Institut national de formation et de recherche en éducation" (INFRE), in Benin, are not able to attract and keep educational researchers. Indeed, their official administrative status are disadvantageous when compared to those of the first two types of institutions. The researchers are not as well paid and promoted as their colleagues at the university or at the "Ecole normale supérieure". So, at the first opportunity, they leave the institution for good conditions elsewhere. This is the case in Benin. Of course, these statements cannot be formally generalised to other French speaking African countries without related data. However, from regional seminars and meetings held among people interested in educational research, it seems that the situation is similar within the whole region.

Given such a situation, NGOs are being considered good alternatives with regard to educational research in Sub-Saharan Africa. Accordingly, there is room for NGOs in educational research.

That is the context within which NGOs such as ASTED (Association Science et Technologies Educatives pour le Développement) in Benin, and ROCARE (Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain pour la Recherche en Education) came into existence with mandates to play an active role in educational research.

To summarize, in the context of CB, educational research community should include collective players such as NGOs which are interested in educational research and are able to do it.

2.2.3 From government officials' perspective (Anna Obura)

From government officials' perspective, CB seems to be conceived as a process through which more researchers and a new type of researcher will be produced.

MORE RESEARCHERS

Contrary to all apparences, ministries do need more research on several aspects of education. To run the education system effectively and efficiently, they need a wide range of factual, analytical information and research findings on: (1) input variables, (2) process variables, (3) output variables, (4) match between education and society, and so on.

Based on this huge need of data, producing more educational researchers has become imperative for ministries which have to supply their countries with good citizens and a competent workforce.

A DIFFERENT TYPE OF RESEARCHER

Ministries need not only more researchers but also a new type of researcher. There is a need for researchers able to engage in both responsive (curative) research and increasingly in anticipative (preventive) research. There is a need for researchers who are highly skilled in both quantitative and qualitative investigation, willing and able to engage both in theoretical and increasingly in applied (functional) research. There is a need for researchers who will do research, disseminate research findings and help to get them utilized. This new type of researcher needed is supposed:

- o To have solid knowledge of his/her own education system;
- o To be exposed to other African education systems;
- o To know what other countries have tried and particularly what it did cost;
- o To have read about, have travelled and experienced different education systems;

- o To have a global perspective on education in developing countries, issues and different experiences;
- o To interact positively not only with other researchers at the national or regional levels (university, ministry or NGO researchers) but also with education professionals at different levels: from the grassroot practitioner to the top management level.

South-South exchange and southern documentation centres are some of the mechanisms that can help to realise these two objectives. At the moment, south-south exchange of information and ideas is lacking. No donor is presently willing to encourage regional and continental exchanges. Donors, southern NGOs and NGIs should collaborate to deal with the issue of organizing and maintaining documentation centres and encouraging South-South exchanges.

2.2.4 From a teacher's perspective (Justin Galabawa University of Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania)

The speaker spoke on behalf of two types of classroom teacher: (1) the primary school teacher and (2) the secondary school teacher.

How is CB perceived by these two types of practitioner ?

- o A HRD mechanism, aimed at producing an elitist class of people who are supposed to work in the universities, in the high institutions of curriculum development or in the research centres.
- o In terms of structure, CB are highly centralized structures of research, found in universities and in urban areas and never in rural areas. They need a lot of money from both governments and donors.
- o In terms of leadership, they are groups of local people, rigidly connected with donors and the outside world, having very little connection with grassroot (primary school or secondary school teachers, for instance).

How would they like it to be ?

- o A group of people who come down to practitioners and try to improve things at the grassroot;
- o A system where new research knowledge is fed back to the school system, at the grassroot, at the school level, at the community level, the village level;
- o They would like to be provided with both data on different aspects of the school system and with skills to effectively play their role as change agents.

- o Through CB they would like to acquire competence to deal effectively with their multiple roles: teacher role, resource mobilizer role and community effort mobilizer role.

2.3 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS RAISED DURING THE DISCUSSION

The most important comments and questions raised during the discussion period can be summarized as follows:

- a) Government officials and national researchers do not have easy dialogue: some explanation

There is no doubt, ministry officials and African academics do not always have an easy dialogue. The explanation lies at least partly in two factors. First, ministry officials often feel that national researchers are generally critical of them, that they do not appreciate the work and working methods of ministries. They fail to fully appreciate the political strength and positive gain of ministries work. Their critiques are generally unfavorable so that their research is often seen as negative to ministries activities. Such a situation does not favor ministry officials calling for African academics for research.

Interactions between African academics and government officials are also hampered by another factor. Government officials say that they have some sensitive information that should be kept secret and they are not sure national researchers will keep such sensitive information secret once it is made available to them in the context of their research.

All of the above factors cause some government officials to prefer dealing with international experts, organizations and donors, because these will not be as critical as national researchers and they are likely to keep secret all sensitive information provided to them.

b) CB: educational key players need to be sensitized

Capacity building in educational research requires an effort of sensitization directed to educational key players, such as government officials, classroom teachers, parents and NGOs. There is a real need for lobbying in order to create a positive attitude for research usefulness on the part of all key players and particularly government officials and classroom teachers. Such an effort should be a genuine component of educational researchers' role if they want to survive as researchers in a world of highly competing forces.

Working within these parameters, African academics are expected to lobby and to get the politicians as well as other key players to look at research as an essential component of both education development and national development

c) The atrophy factor and the brain drain

Many African academics received a high quality education, at the highest levels (master and Ph.D. degrees), in very distinguished Western institutions of higher education. But ten years after they are back home, they are almost back to square zero with regard to scientific skills and knowledge. What can be done to avoid such a wastege ?

Furthermore, many of those highly qualified African people trained to work for African development, tend to run away at the first opportunity in search for an other environment where they can better work and live. What can be done to stop such a damaging brain drain ?

For many participants this two-fold issue has nothing to do with African academics as individuals. The brain drain and the scientific atrophy are not to be separated from the wide economic, political and social environment (the whole system) in which they live.

No matter how qualified African academics are, no matter how solid their scientific background is, there are some conditions and a research space that are deemed to be conducive to research activity and which are crucially lacking in many African environments:

- o Personal safety is not guaranteed in many African societies;
- o Lack and deficiency of research infrastructures;
- o Basic survival needs being hardly met within researchers' living environment;
- o Heavy teaching duty carried by African academics.

All the above factors constitute the realities in which African academics live and which remove them from the research and scientific world, in addition to contributing either to their scientific atrophy or to their running away before the atrophy factor arises.

Some other participants believed that working for development within the countries rather than abroad was, at least partly, a matter of consciousness (a matter of personal ethics) on the part of individual researchers. Without making any judgement, they argued that all those who ran away are not necessarily those who could not manage to survive within the above mentioned realities. There is, at least partly, a matter of individual determination, a question of "To be or not to be".

For others again, the gap between training context abroad and working context in the countries is so great that it takes a high degree of creativity for many African academics to operate properly and be productive when they are back home.

d) CB: a shift from individual to teamworking researchers

There was a widespread recognition of the fact that the concept of CB should be focussed not on individual researchers as it was conceived in the past but rather on teamworking ability development. CB investment in educational research should be made with priority to collective, institutional training (institutional strengthening) rather than individuals training. Training educational researchers for CB should be based on pertinent issues in regard to the country, on teamwork spirit, as well as on creativity.

e) African research networking: a need for a genuine dynamics by African.

Building networks among African educational researchers was considered by many participants as another approach to CB in educational research.

The following were cited among examples of networking to be followed and improved: ROCARE (Réseau Ouest et Centre Africain pour la Recherche en Education); AAS (African Academy of Science); ACTS (African Centre for Technology Studies).

However, for networking to be permanent and viable, it has been stressed that it should be essentially inner-driven. The desire to networking should really originate from local or regional researchers. In other words, there should be really a genuine desire on the part of African educational researchers to collaborate within their countries and accross national boundaries in order to shift the balance of the dynamics more towards the researchers themselves and away from donor-driven processes. Preferably, there should be not only inner-desire to collaborate but also some concret actions or common undertakings towards such an objective.

If networking was found to be a good strategy for CB in educational research, inner-driven networking was found to be the best approach to avoid dependancy to donor agencies, and to ensure the networking continuity after the donor has moved out.

- f) Training AAs within African universities: a strategy for
CB

While so many African researchers are trained abroad, there are some African universities which have graduate programmes (master and Ph.D.), but no effort is made to develop them. Whether the programme is available in the country or in the region, donors tend to include foreign training in their packages and African countries have to take it. Such a policy of automatically allowing African master and doctorate candidates to go abroad should be questioned. From the viewpoint of many participants, training within the country or the region, at least partly (split degrees), will be of more benefit to Africa. For example, such an approach was judged by some participants to be likely to keep African academics away from illusions created by the training context (abroad) and stimulate the creativity which is needed to perform in an African working context.

Master and Ph.D. programmes in African universities which are able to offer them should be encouraged, promoted and strengthened. There should be a policy to keep candidates to these programmes in African universities offering them, and at the same time efforts should be made to strengthen them. A participant stressed this need in the following terms: "Whatever it takes, we should analyse and find strategies to keep people within their countries."

2.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUMMARY

Based on the presentations and on comments made about them, the answers to the question asked to the speakers can be summarized as follows.

A. What does CB mean in educational research in Africa ?

Educational research CB in Africa is a complex and a multi-facet process. The following are some of its dimensions provided by the presenters and the participants:

- a) HRD, meaning that CB requires training highly qualified senior researchers;
- b) Full utilization of those senior researchers already available;
- c) Developing research infrastructures, a research conducive context;
- d) Developing creativity in terms of capacity to evolve new research framework, new designs and research methodologies;
- e) Developing mechanisms to promote demands for research, research findings dissemination and research findings utilization;
- f) A process that should be connected to local realities, resources and constraints.

B. How is it implemented and practiced by various players ?

Not only is the CB in educational research a complex reality but its practice and its implementation also require a combination of strategies, the following being some of them:

- a) Training more researchers and a new type of researcher.
By new type of researcher it is meant that:
 - o The researcher has a solid background on African issues and realities;
 - o The researcher has a flexible training and is able to interact with other researchers, as well as with other key players in education;
 - o The researcher is capable of performing not only in training context (abroad) or in artificial context created by projets (in the countries) but also, and more importantly, in real African context;
 - o The researcher's role extends beyond research conducting and research findings dissemination to include research findings utilization and lobbying, sensitizing or activist role among educational players.

- b) Extending research community to outside university researchers: individual and collective (NGOs) researchers interested in and able to do educational research;
- c) Developing teamworking and inner-driven networking among African educational researchers;
- d) Developing and promoting training within the countries and the region;
- e) Developing mechanisms aimed at stopping, or at least diminishing, brain drain;
- f) Investing more in institutional training (institutional strengthening) rather than individual training (isolated individuals training);
- g) Investing in research environment improving and strengthening.

Chapter III COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

3.1 CHAIRPERSON'S BACKGROUND PRESENTATION: SUMMARY AND THE UNDERLYING QUESTION. (Chairperson: Richard Maclure)

Having had an overview of educational research in the context and the constraints of Sub-Saharan Africa (chapters 1 and 2), now is the time to look at the future, to consider where we go from here. What should characterize different players' relationship in educational research process, at the different levels (local, national, regional and international) ? What do collaboration and partnership mean for African players ? What would you advice CIDA, IDRC and canadian universities to do in the future ? Where do we go from here on ? These are the introductory questions the chairperson asked. They were followed by the presentation of some realities that should be kept in mind. The most important of them may be summarized in the following way.

New ideas to be implemented in an old system

In the Canadian new development assistance policy, SHARING OUR FUTURE (1988), CIDA stated that the old area of donor-recipient relation has died and has been replaced by the concepts of inter-dependancy and cooperation; that equity, mutual respect and partnership should characterize North-South relations.

However, the real context in which these new ideas are being invested has not changed. It has been and still is characterized by the pattern of one partner giving money and teaching and the other partner receiving money and learning. In such a context, the agenda of much educational research in education systems has been and still is donor-driven and a great deal of time on part the of African ministry officials is spent in responding to international aid agencies requirements.

Encouraging trends

In Canada, for the past 3 or 4 years, CIDA had made some progress regarding collaboration. First, decentralization. By decentralizing its operations, CIDA gave more autonomy to its regional officers so that they can negotiate more equitably with local officers. Second, diversification of Canadian players. CIDA Canadian partners are now recruited not only among Canadian universities but also among non-government organizations (NGOs) as well as the business community. This has been done based on the assumption that universities with their research expertise, NGOs with their grassroots orientation and the business community with its entrepreneurship skills are in the best position to establish genuine linkages and partnership with other sectors in developing world.

The IDRC, on its part, has kept its tradition of setting its research assistance policy on a basis of dialogue with researchers in Third World regions. All these are genuine trends on the part of AID agencies.

Constraints

These ideas are being carried out and these trends are taking place and have to be sustained in an unfavorable socio-economic and political context. The first unfavorable factor is the world recession. Within the context of recession, there is a problem of resources limitation. This scarcity of resources has been exacerbated by a second unfavorable factor, the growing number of recipient countries, among which many east-European countries that have been liberated from communism. The conflicting interests of donor countries constitute a third unfavorable factor. These countries have to fight two battles at the same time. On one hand they have their own internal socio-economic problems that need to be addressed; on the other hand, they have to sustain Third World development assistance.

Given these conflicting situations, development assistance has become a very much competitive business both internationally and intra-nationally.

Possible scenarios:

From the above considerations, the process of implementing and institutionalizing new collaborative associations is expected to be immensely difficult. Here are some possible scenarios at both national and international levels.

At the national level, the first scenario may be the following: On one hand, collaboration and partnership may be simply, a mechanism devised to mask the fragile dynamism of the state and ministry of education. On the other hand, it may be a means of shifting the financial burden of education to parents and communities, without genuine involvement in decision-making. The alternative scenario, which is also possible and which is needed from now on, may be to make sure that collaboration and partnership represent a genuine trend towards decentralization of decision-making and implementation, towards a system where schools are all accountable to communities, where parents and communities have some say on the way the school is run, and where teachers have some say on school policy and curriculum.

At the international level, the first scenario may be the following. Talks on collaboration and partnership may serve to mask an international tendency of donor agencies to coopt certain politicians, government officials and researchers more effectively, to

justify international interventionist and directive policies which rebound the advantages and interests of domestic, political and economical environments of donor countries. The alternative scenario here may be that, in fact, the notions of partnership and collaboration mean a genuine inclination and efforts on the part of donors towards flexibility, to try to accommodate a multitude of different systems and world views. In other words, donor agencies may genuinely try to transfer the dynamic of planning and decision-making regarding the use of their own funds, and to genuinely engage researchers and policy-makers in the policy-making process of aid agencies. And that means a shift in the prevailing configuration of power, which is not easier given domestic constraints.

This background presentation led to the following underlying question: What are the new and useful collaborative approaches in educational research and how do we move this process along, both at national and international scale ?

3.2 POINTS RAISED BY THE SPEAKERS

3.2.1 From an academic perspective (Jean Moisset, Laval University, Quebec, Canada)

Recalling the education situation in Sub-Saharan Africa, the speaker summarized it as being characterized by the following factors;

- o Lack and/or deficiency of articulation among different educational players: governments, local authorities, local communities, donor agencies);
- o Lack or deficiency of the education priorities, goals and objectives definition process;
- o Tight control of educational priorities, goals and objectives definition process on the part of donor agencies and other foreign players;
- o Irrelevance of education and educational research priorities with regards to current societal needs;
- o Lack of functional link among national players: governments, local authorities, educational institutions and local communities;
- o When educational research is relevant to current societal needs, its findings are not utilized to guide educational development.

Following the above recall, he stated the need, the urgent need for re-articulation of the relations among different players in African education and educational research. Then he stated the guiding principle of such a re-articulation process: the convergent interventions of different key players.

According to such a principle, the terms of reference in education projects and education research projects should be defined by all the key players, but with predominance being given to recipient countries players. The following citation somewhat illustrates such a position:

"La définition et le choix des objectifs et des priorités en éducation et en recherches éducatives relèvent de l'ensemble des partenaires en éducation et en recherche, y compris les bailleurs de fonds; bien que ceci ne soit pas leur rôle premier."

For the speaker, governments and government organizations should assume the leadership and coordination role in education priorities definition and delivery process. Local authorities and communities, on their part, should collaborate to the whole process and, specifically, they should contribute, in different ways, to funding resources diversification. Donor agencies should collaborate and assume the advisor role.

The speaker ended up by citing an example of collaboration which did not really succeed for many reasons, but which still is, from his viewpoint, a good model to be retried. The suggested model was "Le projet ouest-africain de formation des chercheurs en éducation".

This model was run in two phases. At the first phase, it was hosted by the executive agency, Laval University (Quebec, Canada). The delivered training combined research methodologies, education theories, African realities and current educational problems, from which thesis topics were to be selected. At the second phase, the project was transferred in Africa and hosted by one of the recipient countries: the Togo, at Lomé. There, graduates from the first phase, helped by academics from Laval University, took the responsibility of training other African educational researchers.

However, the speaker omitted to give some lessons learned from such an apparently good model, especially the factors that caused it to fail; and the participants omitted to ask for such information during the discussion period.

3.2.2 From a decision-maker perspective (Anthony Hopkin, University of Botswana)

The speaker spoke about current problems concerning the relationship between educational research and policy-making. These problems represent important issues of the partnership between researchers and policy-makers. He summarized those problems into what he called the four BPs.

a) Be Prompt (BP)

According to this BP, researchers should realize that they have to deliver on time the findings of the research they do for decision-making. They should realize that they are answerable to decision-makers not only in terms of quality of their work, but also in terms of time they take to do it.

"As far as I see it, the speaker said, the academic time means NEVER."

b) Be Pertinent (BP)

Researchers should realize that what decision-makers need are answers to the questions being researched upon, and not what they are interested in. For the speaker, many academics delight in knowing a lot about very little. They should stop wasting time with irrelevant issues and ideas.

c) Be Practical (BP)

Policy-makers are faced with practical problems. What they need are practical solutions. Researchers should realise that when they are asked for research, what is needed is practical and usable knowledge. This means that when asked to answer a practical educational problem, they should stop dealing with too many impractical and unappliable knowledge.

d) Be Polite (BP)

No matter how senior and how expert they are, researchers should realise that they are not exempt from being polite towards policy-makers who ask them for research. Put simply, policy-makers need to be respected by researchers.

3.2.3 From a donor's perspective (Patricia Miaro, Education and Training Section, CIDA, Canada)

a) The context of partnership at CIDA: a brief introduction

Two features constitute the main areas of CIDA educational interventions or projets: (1) institutional strengthening and (2) human resource development (HRD).

Those two features are put forward in a vast context whose essential characteristics required by CIDA are:

- o Globalization of world relationship;
- o Interdependance among people in the world;
- o Democratization of recipient countries;
- o Gradual importance of private sector contribution;
- o Gradual limitation of financial resources and personnel;
- o Importance of participation.

As to participation, it is required not only among Third World partners but also among Canadian taxpayers. Canadian society wants to have a say on the way aid programmes are conceived and delivered. That is the context in which partnership is taking place.

b) Partnership defined and classified

Partnership is a quite complex concept. It has been defined and classified in different ways. As defined by CIDA policy branch, partnership is:

"A relationship between two social entities called partners, in which decisions, human and financial resources, information and experience are mutually shared based on equitable arrangements regarding trust, accountability and exchanges."

Partnership might be classified according to different criteria. Here is a type of classification based on two criteria: the mission of the partner and the geographic location of the partner.

o Based on the location, there may be:

- North-North partnership: between educational players in the North. For instance, CIDA with its canadian partners.
- South-South partnership: involving educational players in the South. For instance, partnership between two universities of the Third World.
- North-South partnership: between educational players in the North and their counterparts in the South.

o According to their mission, partners in education may be:

- Governments and government organizations;
- Non-Government organizations (NGOs);
- Non-government institutions (Universities);
- Bilateral or multilateral agencies;
- Private sector, etc.

c) Conditions for partnership to emerge

For a genuine partnership to emerge, several conditions are required. The following are the most crucial rules selected and presented by the speaker and which have to be observed for real partnership to happen.

- o **Sharing rule:** Partners should share responsibilities and authority, knowledge and experiences, they should share information, resources and benefit... at different phases of the project.
- o **Compatibility and common goals and objectives rule:** Partnership is facilitated by a set of common or at least compatible goals, objectives and strategies agreed upon in advance by all the partners.
- o **Participation and involvement rule:** Partnership is likely to happen if all the partners are actively involved, are given the opportunity to participate to decision-making, project planning, execution and evaluation.
- o **Dialogue, mutual trust and respect rule:** To be equitable, partnership must be based on the trust and mutual respect among partners.

From the outset, the partners should define both the strong points and the weak points they bring to the relationship.

- o Roles and responsibilities definition rule: A clear and precise definition of the role and responsibilities of each partner (clear terms of reference) at the outset of a partnership relation facilitates the implementation of the project to the mutual benefit of the partners.

d) Lessons learned at CIDA regarding partnership

At CIDA, the concept of partnership has been around for a while, since the beginning of the eighties. For the last twelve years, there has been more and more emphasis on partnership. From project evaluation and monitoring, there has been a lot of lessons learned at CIDA regarding partnership. The following are some of the most important lessons learned that caused partnership projects to succeed:

- o Mutual benefit: A partnership project needs to be designed to benefit both partners. This means that each partner has to spell out what is its expected benefit.
- o Concrete objectives: A partnership project is likely to succeed when it has specific and concrete objectives,

such as: enhancement of research, of teaching programs, enhancement of management capacity, of community services and outreach, of policy development and planning ...

- o **Top management commitment:** Even if it is an initiative of a professor, there is a need for top management commitment. Linkage arrangements are likely to be more effective and sustainable if they move from the personal to the institutional level.
- o **Large basis involvement and participation:** The experience has shown that the larger the basis of involvement and participation at both Canadian and Third World partner institution, the more likely the project is to succeed, to grow, and have multiplier effects.
- o **Mutual exchange of players:** When designed, the project should make provisions so that there are opportunities to develop links, trust and goodwill. The exchange of players should be from both sides. This means that not only Canadians have to visit the partner institution and work in it, teach and do research, but also Third World institution partners should be given the same opportunity.

e) Challenges for CIDA in regard to partnership

To help to develop genuine partnership among Canadian and Third World educational players, CIDA has many challenges, of which the most obvious and urgent are the following:

- o Challenge regarding consultation mechanism: CIDA should establish and strengthen consultation mechanisms to facilitate its consultation with both Canadian and Third World partners.
- o Challenge regarding the choice and training of partner: The Canadian partners have to be selected, contracted out. As CIDA has its orientation, its way of doing things, the selected and contracted partners need to be trained. They have to learn CIDA policy and orientation as well as its way of doing things.
- o Challenge regarding sharing experiences: Good experiences and good project evaluation findings regarding partnership are not shared by all partners. CIDA should find and improve ways of sharing these experiences and evaluation findings with all its partners, both Canadian and Southern.

- o Challenge regarding timeframe: Given the variety of its partners and the complexity of partnership issues in the projects, given that the dynamics of partnership requires time, time dimension should be taken into account. CIDA faces a challenge of changing its timeframe for doing things.

3.2.4 From an academic's perspective (Magdalene Juma, Kenyatta University)

According to the speaker, collaboration and partnership are old habits in many African universities, especially at Kenyatta University. These collaborative efforts have been occurring for several years and in many ways:

- o Researchers from developed countries have worked closely with African experts and strengthening their capacity;
- o Collaborative efforts have supported publications of studies by African institutions or networks;
- o Students from developing countries have taken benefit of partnership in terms of further education in developed countries universities (master and Ph.D. degrees);
- o Collaborative efforts have supported participation of African scholars at professional meetings abroad.

All this has given African researchers the opportunity to share experiences with their counterparts abroad. However, there is a need, and there is room for improvement. Indeed, sometimes:

- o Priority areas of research do not necessarily meet priority needs and demands of African partners;
- o Exchange of experts is a one way process. Experts from developed countries come to developing countries and scholars from the Third World are not given the same opportunity to visit and work in the Western partner institution. And when they do, they are not treated in the same way.

The speaker suggested some strategies that should help real partnership emerge:

- o Encouraging useful collaboration and partnership among African researchers themselves, African researchers and policy-makers, African researchers and educational practitioners.
- o Sensitizing central and local authorities as well as local community to the value of research in development.
- o Diversifying sources of research funds in order to reduce overdependence on donor agencies.

This can be done, for instance, by attracting private organizations in African countries and assisting them to find out how research can help and by motivating them to use local or regional university resources to respond to their research needs.

3.3 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS RAISED DURING THE DISCUSSION

There was no time enough for the participants to discuss on different issues raised by the four presentations. However, it seems interesting, in such a report, to mention the most important of them, whether they were fully discussed or not.

a) Overloaded agendas

International collaboration and international research projects have too many masters to serve. They have to satisfy various and even conflicting interests: the needs of Canadian institutions, of African institutions, of local governments; the needs of international donors and those of community at large. A lot of masters, a lot of priorities to load on to a given project or a given collaboration intervention. This raises the crucial question of whose interest, whose agendas come first. Being pulled in many directions, the project itself encounters many difficulties. This complexity of the situation deserves recognition.

b) University and grassroot development

According to a recent evaluation of educational institutions programme (EIP) at CIDA, generally speaking, Canadian partnership projects with the Third World institutions were found to be very successful when they dealt with research, curriculum development or training. But they were not found successful at all when dealing with the needs at the grassroot level, the broader community objectives. Based on such a state of affairs, participants were wondering if the universities and higher education institutions, as elitist creations, were the appropriate mechanisms for grassroot development. Then came the question of how those institutions can be made to address those areas. "What can be done to enable, to empower these institutions to deal effectively with grassroot development?", a participant asked. Such a debate partly justifies, for some participants, NGOs in educational research.

c) Is sustainability an achievable goal ?

The whole notion of sustainability was questioned. Year after year, money is poured in to achieve sustainability; but as yet, it does not suggest much institution sustainability. So increasingly donor agencies are wondering if Third World institutions will ever become sustainable. "When can we start reducing the aid flow?", a participant asked.

d) Are mutual benefit and priority consensus attainable ?

Also criticized were the concepts of mutual benefit and priority needs consensus requirement. Recognizing that partners have different constraints, different interest, different systems of accountability, different agendas, different cultures and situations, participants were wondering if it will ever be possible to arrive at a consensus whereby mutual benefit can be taken from collaboration; if it will be possible to find a way of establishing consensus of priority needs.

e) Partnership: a multi-faced concept

The partnership was judged to be a complex reality. The concept has to be developed and promoted in different dimensions: (1) intra-national and intra-regional partnership, (2) interdisciplinary partnership, (3) South-North partnership and even (4) partnership among donors agencies.

INTRA-NATIONAL AND INTRA-REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

For many participants, the type of partnership which is crucially needed and which is lacking is the partnership among Third World researchers themselves (South-South partnership).

In the case of Africa, it is essentially the intra-national and intra-regional partnership that is needed. To improve research skills and capacities, African scholars should collaborate nationally and regionally and exchange research experiences. There is a need, for instance, for interaction among African educational institutions and civil institutions, among French speaking universities themselves, among English speaking universities themselves, and between the universities of the two blocks. There should be dialogue, cooperation and exchanges among Sub-Saharan African institutions and researchers.

During the whole seminar and especially during the third session, this crucial need for South-South partnership or regional cooperation among educational players was repeatedly stated by many participants. One participant stressed it as follows:

"What is true and what we should realise is that the development of Africa will have to be done by Africans themselves."

However, it has been noted that many donor agencies are not very interested in supporting and promoting this needed internal partnership. They fail to realise that to have an impact on African development, South-North partnership should empower overseas partners to make linkages among them.

THE NEED FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY PARTNERSHIP

The problems in education are not all specific to this sector. Indeed, most crucial decisions related to or affecting the education sector are taken by the ministry of economics or by the director of central bank. Based on this reality, some participants stated that partnership in education should involve other disciplines. The involvement, in educational partnership, of other people such as union leaders, people from other disciplines might produce a real difference.

Thus, in addition to being developed and promoted among education players, education institutions and educational researchers, educational partnership should be promoted to different non-educational institutions and people outside the education sector.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CANADIAN AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS

If partnership among people facing the same problems, the same constraints and living in almost the same conditions (South-South partnership) was judged the most important by many participants, South-North partnership was found to be very necessary and usefull as well as enriching. African educational players do have much to learn from those people who, at some moment of their history, had faced similar problems and found their way out.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION AMONG DONOR AGENCIES

Partnership and collaboration for African development need to be promoted not only within the region, but also among the aid agencies. To be viable, research partnership, research collaboration or research networks in education cannot rely on one donor agency. If, on the part of African countries, there is a need for regional collaboration, there is also a need for convergent interventions in regional projects, on the part of donor agencies.

- f) African centres of excellence as strategy for partnership: for or against ?

In the context of regional cooperation, one of the various strategies suggested to create educational research capacity in Africa was the creation of centres of excellence located in the region. Certain African universities have been offering Ph.D. programmes in education. Instead of sending African students and researchers abroad, some of those programmes might be first strengthened then fed with African students and researchers in education. This will create local capacity in educational research while keeping people within their region. This will also help to develop partnership, especially intra-regional or South-South partnership.

However an unfavorable factor to this suggestion is the political instability that characterizes many African countries. When the centres of excellence are located in Africa, there is no guarantee that in case of political instability in the hosting country they will not be destroyed by the belligerents or hijacked by any national leaders and put under their exclusive control.

g) The need for academic refugy centres

There are many ethnic, internal conflicts, civil wars going on in the continent. As a consequence to this, there is a large number of displaced academics who often end up leaving their countries and taking refugy in the West where some of them cannot even find a job in their field of specialization and are confined to live on the welfare. Given this fact, a participant was wondering if it was possible to establish academic refugy centres for displaced African academics where they can live and work for African development instead of being dispersed in Western type of institution.

h) Entrepreneurship and informal sector in Africa: A promissing opportunity for educational research

The African economy is characterized by a dualist labor market model where the prevailing modern or formal sector of the economy is increasingly complemented by the growing informal sector.

In such a context it seems increasingly unacceptable for the education system to be essentially linked to the needs of the modern sector which is increasingly becoming unable to absorb more than a very small proportion of the economically active workforce. Instead of exclusively being linked to the modern sector (which prepares young people to wage-employment), the education system should also prepare many young people to self-employment by teaching them entrepreneurship skills. The African education system should go beyond the formal schooling to include the non-formal education or the system of skills and knowledge acquisition outside the boundaries of the school system.

However at the moment this promising sector is neglected. Very little is known of it. Simply put, entrepreneurship, informal sector and non-formal education should be an important area of educational research.

- i) The need to know more about the already existing good projects

In some African countries such as Kenya successful experiences and projects on partnership are operating with IDRC assistance. These projects which seem to be working well need to be analysed and evaluated to find out what might be the implications for education in both formal and non-formal sector. This is an area where applied educational research will be of great use.

j) Educational research projects in Africa: some advices

Research projects in education in Africa should be made so that they are not monolithic in any way. It is worth keeping in mind that research does not mean funded research; neither does it mean full-time research or big project research.

Funded research is not the only type of research needed. All the research activities do not need to be funded. The need for funded research is obvious but it should not hamper the wide range of non-funded research activities the education researchers and practitioners can engage in to improve educational process. Educational researchers and practitioners should be encouraged to conduct non-funded educational research.

Educational research may be conducted both on a full-time basis and on a part-time basis. There is a need for full-time staff engaged in educational research; but this is not always possible. Whatever the situation, full-time research should be complemented by part-time research. People in full-time non research position who are able to conduct research may be given grants to do research on part-time basis. By doing so there are no salary costs involved. This can be a very fruitfull line of conducting research.

The worth of a research project has nothing to do with how big it is and how big is its grant. Educational research may be conducted on a small project basis and be very usefull. Without denying the usefullness of big educational projects, emphasis was put on the importance of small projects which were judged to be manageable and more likely to succeed. Accordingly, mega-projects were declared inappropriate to educational research and considered as things to be avoided.

k) The need for academic freedom

Another element that has been stressed within the context of partnership is the question of academic freedom. In Africa, the lack of freedom is among the major constraints in the production of new knowledge and innovations. Basic freedom has been absent within many African societies. There is a need for freedom, academic freedom, freedom to express different views and to come up with alternatives.

However in the last few years this space seems to be opening up in a few countries. But how can partnership widen the space of freedom so that African researchers can effectively contribute to the solutions of development problems ?

1) **Changing attitudes about training in an other African country**

Training within African countries has been judged to be a good strategy for both capacity building and intra-regional partnership development. However, there are many barriers that limit the use of training in Africa. The most important of them is the psychological barrier. Africans themselves have negative attitude in regard to training "made in Africa". So, if training in Africa is to succeed as a strategy of capacity building and intra-regional collaboration and partnership, there is a need to change attitude about it. Training should be valued based on its own worth and no matter where did it happen. African people should see training in another African country or in their own country as a positive element and an element of building into the future.

3.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUMMARY

Two features can be derived from both the presentations on educational research partnership in Africa and the comments made about them: First, the multi-dimensional nature of partnership and second, the major ingredients of a successful partnership. These two features are the essential concluding elements of this theme.

3.4.1 Partnership: a multi-dimensional reality

Based on the presentations and the comments on them, partnership can be defined as:

A relationship between two or more social entities called partners. It aims at partners' mutual benefits and implies sharing decisions, human and financial resources, information and experiences as well as responsibilities. It is based on equitable arrangements regarding trust, accountability and exchanges.

Partnership involves a variety of people: people in education and those outside the education field; people in the same country and region or those in different countries and regions; people from the North and those from the South; people in the same positions (for instance aid agencies among them, or developing countries among them) or those in different and complementary positions (South-North partners); people from different sectors (public or private sectors, profit or non-profit sectors).

For many participants, there is a need to develop and promote all the types of partnership, but the most important of them should be the South-South partnership.

3.4.2 Major ingredients of successful partnership

The following are the major ingredients of successful partnership in educational research in Africa, as derived from the presentations and the comments made about them:

- a) Compatibility of partners' goals and objectives;
- b) Convergent interventions of different key players in education and at various levels of the research process;
- c) Clear and agreed upon definitions of education priorities and objectives, of terms of reference and each partner's input;
- d) Fit between educational research and current education problems to be solved through partnership;
- e) Application of the sharing rule in each aspect of the intervention: sharing knowledge and experiences; sharing resources and responsibilities; sharing benefits;
- f) Application of participation and involvement rule at both national and international levels, at each stage of the intervention cycle;
- g) Dialogue, mutual trust and respect between the partners;
- h) Inner-driven teamworking and networking among partners;
- i) Diversification of partnership funding resources;
- j) Top management commitment regarding the intervention;
- k) Flexibility in regard to the timeframe.

CHAPTER IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 CONCLUSION: ISSUES AGREED UPON:

With certain differences, participants agreed upon a series of issues. The most important of them can be synthesized as follows:

- a) **The past experience did not work:** Due to the complexity and the diversity of factors affecting education, the experience of education development conducted in the past has not been as successful as expected.
- b) **Resources are gradually diminishing:** Resources to be expected from outside are going to be minimum. There is going to be limited resources flowing from the North to the South and, at the same time, major outflow of resources through debt repayment and capital flight from the South to the North.
- c) **Educational research does not receive enough recognition:** The role of educational research as development tool is not always recognized by policy-makers.

- d) **Current educational research is irrelevant:** Educational research currently done is irrelevant with regard to current education problems to be solved. It is essentially done for researcher's own promotion as well as his/her recognition by peers. Thus, it is more theoretical than problem-oriented.
- e) **Current educational research output is inaccessible:** Research findings are not published. Even when published, they are not popularized and utilised to solve education problems.
- f) **African researchers are living and working in harsh conditions:** As an individual educational researcher in Africa is living in survival conditions. As a research professional, he/she works in a fragile infrastructure, with plenty of environmental constraints. The working conditions are extremely less conducive to research activities.
- g) **African universities were and still are ivory towers:** African universities were and still are considered as separated from the society. University people had and still have no contact with grassroot people, with different local education players. They were extrovert.

- h) African education was and still is conceived for and without the people: All the key players in education and its beneficiaries are not involved and do not participate in all the stages of intervention cycle. In addition there is a tight control on education and educational research agendas on the part of donor agencies.
- i) Currently existing research capacity is underutilized: In terms of institutions or individual researchers, existing research capacity is being underutilized. On one hand international experts are being utilised while local experts with the same competence are available. On the other hand, training abroad is being used even if solid local and more adapted programmes are available.
- j) Astrophy factor coupled to brain drain reduces existing research capacities: The deficiency and the weakness of existing educational research capacity are being aggravated by the growing number of qualified people who leave the countries in search for appropriate environments to work in and by the obsolescence and even the atrophy of aquired capacities of those who remain in the countries.

- k) There are unexplored promising educational research areas: Indigenous knowledge, informal sector and non-formal education, on which a growing number of people depend, remain neglected areas of research.
- 1) The need for new ways of doing things is evident: Things need to be done in a different and an efficient way. In other words, there is a need to find out new ways of doing things which need to be done in the education sector. But what does this mean ? The point 4.2 will suggest answers to this question based on the presentations as well as comments about them.

4.2 SUGGESTIONS: FOURTEEN POLICY CHALLENGES:

Basic features of educational research challenges as derived from presentations, questions and comments may be summarized into fourteen policy challenges, addressed to different key players.

1. Fully utilizing existing senior researchers: Each African country has a certain number of highly qualified educational researchers. In their education or educational research projects, policy-makers and donor agencies should first look at this local research community before bringing in foreign experts with the same competence.

As far as those national or regional recognized experts are available, they should be given top priority when compared to foreign scholars. This is a challenge for both policy-makers and donor agencies.

2. Sensitizing key players on the importance of educational research as development tool. If educational research is going to have any impact at all on educational practice and policy-making, African researchers will have to play a more complex role. Their duty should extend knowledge generation and dissemination to include a more activist role of sensitizing people, and especially key players, to the importance of educational research as development tool. They should play an advocacy role to both practitioners and policy-makers in terms of promoting the usefulness of educational research in educational problem solving.

In addition to their traditional duty - knowledge generation and dissemination - they should be committed to creating a positive attitude and a positive sense for research usefulness; they should also be concerned by knowledge utilization. This is an exclusive challenge for African academics and researchers.

3. **Keeping people within their country or region:** While African countries are short of qualified educational researchers to contribute to their education development, there is a growing number of those needed experts who leave the continent in search for other living and working environments, especially in the West. African policy-makers and donor agencies should combine efforts to find ways of keeping people in their countries or regions. On the part of African researchers, there is a need to realize that, if one can manage to survive financially and politically, working for development within the country (or the region) rather than abroad is the best and the most significant way of contributing to African development.
4. **Developing higher education programmes in education within African countries:** Qualified people who are needed to deal with African education problems will be better trained in the context where those problems arise rather than abroad. This will help to keep the programmes context-centred. In addition to keeping people within African education realities, training in Africa will contribute to diminishing brain drain. African governments, donor agencies and African academics should join their efforts to develop and promote higher education programmes in Africa.

5. **Developing and promoting regional integration in education:** Education problems facing Sub-Saharan African countries are basically similar. Thus, in some areas of education sector, where there is no need for each country to develop its own programme, regional interventions should be developed and promoted. This will be cost-effective for both donor and recipient countries. For instance, African centres of excellence, which were suggested during the third session of the seminar, may be justified by such a policy. This is a challenge which addresses to policy-makers, donor agencies as well as educational researchers.

6. **Developing creativity skills among African researchers and practitioners:** One of the most important critiques made to African education researchers and practitioners is the lack of innovative or creative skills. They perform well in the way and the context they were trained to do things. However, when facing an unusual context, they generally become unable to be productive. For instance a teacher will require to use the same teaching material as the ones he/she was trained with; and a researcher will require to use the research designs he/she was trained to utilize. But the realities of African education require a lot of creativity on the part of researchers and practitioners. So, creativity is a big challenge for researchers as well as practitioners.

7. **Optimizing the use of available resources or capacities in educational research:** Education and educational research require a lot of resources: financial and human resources, materials, equipments and other types of infrastructures. Given that in the African education context all those resources are scarce, there is a need to find ways of doing what needs to be done with limited resources. This is a challenge for researchers, practitioners as well as decision-makers. In other words, available educational assets should be fully and efficiently utilized at different levels.

8. **Developing partnership and networking:** Given the complexity and the diversity of factors affecting the education sector, there is a need to collaborate nationally, regionally and internationally with those people whose behavior affects directly or indirectly the local education system. To be fruitful, this partnership or collaboration should start at the local level and extend to the national, the regional and the international levels. For some areas of common interest networking might be a good partnership strategy. This is a challenge which addresses to all the key players in African education. Donor agencies are specifically challenged to encourage and promote South-South partnership in addition to the traditional South-North collaboration.

However, it is worth realizing that to have any long lasting impact on African education, partnership and networking should be inner-driven, which means that they should be generated by a genuine African interest rather than by donors' available financial aid. And this is a challenge for African researchers and policy-makers.

9. **Diversifying funding resources:** It has been realised that the traditional educational funding resources (governments and donor agencies) are increasingly becoming less and less able to adequately support the financial burden of the education systems in Africa. Now is the time to look for, to find out and mobilise additional funding resources that may exist within each country or region. These might be private sector, community resources, and so on. African policy-makers and researchers are targeted by such a challenge.
10. **Enlarging educational research community beyond the university:** Carrying out research is part of the fundamental mission of universities. However, while universities have a specific mandate to carry out research, they do not have a monopoly of research.

There are people outside the university community who are qualified and willing to do educational research in Africa. Accepting and encouraging those people as educational researchers is another challenge facing policy-makers and donor agencies.

11. **Developing participation and involving education key players:**
Decisions about education affect not only the school system but also the whole national life: economy, parents, health, agriculture, community life, etc. On one hand, at the national level, opportunity to participate should be given not only to education key players but also to all those who are affected directly or indirectly by the education system. They should have a say on the way education is conceived and delivered. On the other hand, at the international level, African policy-makers, researchers and education practitioners should assume the leadership of educational interventions in their country. They should be involved in and participate to major international decisions affecting their education system.

Promoting and encouraging genuine participation and involvement in education decision-making are a challenge for all education players and specifically for donor agencies and African policy-makers.

12. **Developing mechanisms for research findings publication, popularization and utilisation:** To be of any practical use educational research findings should be made accessible to all those who need them for decision-making or problem solving. This means that if educational research is going to have any impact on decision-making and problem solving in education, the need to conduct educational research should be coupled with the need to find out and develop mechanisms which can facilitate research findings publication and popularization. Donor agencies and African policy-makers should deal with this challenge.

13. **Exploring the unexplored educational research areas:** The traditional school system is a system whereby young people are prepared to work in the formal sector of the economy. However, in Africa, at the same time that the system is increasingly becoming unable to provide such a kind of education to all those who need it, the formal sector of the economy is also becoming increasingly unable to supply all the school system graduates with jobs in terms of wage-employments. In such a context, educational research should not be confined to problems concerning the traditional school system and the formal sector of the economy.

It should go beyond these old areas to include the education process outside the school system (non-formal education) and the informal sector of the economy, as well as indigenous knowledge used by ordinary people in their day after day life. Exploring this knowledge and integrating it to the content of the school system as well as to the whole education system is a challenge for African researchers and academics.

14. Improving researchers' living and working conditions: The last but not the least challenge faced by policy-makers concerns the improvement of living and working conditions of African researchers. Without tackling the problem, dealing with all the other challenges will be useless. Indeed all the other conditions will be unachievable or of no use unless researchers are in research conducive living and working space.

APPENDIX A

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