

**RE-FLAGGING FRANCIS BACON'S
DISTEMPERS OF LEARNING FOR AN
IMPACTFUL PHILOSOPHY OF
EDUCATION IN AFRICA**

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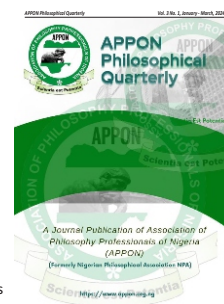
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Abstract

The educative process and societal development are often discussed as Siamese twins that must go together for sustainable and meaningful progress to be made by a people both individually and collectively. There is no society devoid of the educative system and process. The African society is not different. Unfortunately, the school and formal education system in African offer very little in her interventions on the continent's development. Nigeria and most of Africa is enmeshed in societal problems, and challenges that a good, adequate and relevant educational system ought to solve. Unfortunately, Africa is searching for solutions from foreigners and the West. African states lack faith in the products of her educational system and seem very proud and enthusiastic 'partners' in western-driven development initiatives; 'aspiring' to be part of the BRICS economic bloc. African States scramble for external 'peer reviews' as espoused by NEPAD. Unfortunately, not even NEPAD could offer anything better than the local African. Using a critical analytic method, this paper critiques the existing school, especially the university, educational system in Africa, especially Nigeria. It aims to chart a path of a progressive system of education. It adopts Francis Bacon's articulation and critique of learning for its conceptual discourse. It argues that the educational enterprise in African of today consists of 'distempers' and 'slavish attachments.' Consequently, the distempers of Bacon - populism, conformism and dogmatism and blind reliance on Western expertise and scholarship - correlate with the African educational

system. It identifies the *foundational* and *conceptual problems* as the basis of this dysfunction in education. The university system is almost disconnected from its foundation refusing to interact with its local environment. The paper therefore recommends that the formal system of education should be harmonised with the often derided as informal system education. Its stakeholders should be proactive and creative, rather than been conformist and dogmatic. Local relevance, African culture, locally-generated theories, especially of 'man', 'society', and 'political economy' as well as jettisoning prevailing anti-research and intellectual culture perpetuated by existing authoritarianism and dictatorial culture should be hallmarks for a progressive African school system.

Keywords: Distemper of learning; foundational and conceptual problems; development initiatives; university education.

Introduction

Intellectualisations on education in Nigeria, and indeed Africa, often slip into being fault-finding articulations on the academic or school system. Experts believe politicians should run politics, but only 'school people' are 'expected' to run the school system too. However, almost everyone is a so-called expert with perceived 'contributions' towards improving education in Africa. It is contentious if non-school people and international creditors are not the ones running or ruining education in Africa, while 'school people' are confined to the jobs of implementing government policies, taking critical stock after a period of success or failure to achieve set educational goals and overseeing institutions, colleges and schools.

Every generation have a way of thinking that its achievements surpass those of succeeding generations. But without any fear of ambivalence, the prevailing experiential challenges of today's milieu should be adopted to chart ways towards achieving a better future. This is possible by doing some stocktaking of the present situation of education in Africa. Hence, the attempt is made in this paper to do a critique

in order to chart a path for a more progressive system of education in Africa. The use of 'Africa' is rather loose or general. Differences exist in the rating of educational institutions, i.e. universities, in Africa; as well as in their service delivery quality. In most credible ratings of universities in the world, those of South Africa and Egypt are well ahead of those of others countries. Only two Universities in Nigeria arguably find space consistently in this yearly rating.¹

The African Indigenous Initiatives

President Thambo Mbeki regenerated the philosophy of 'African Renaissance.' Cheikh Anta Diop (1923-1986) was its earliest protagonist. Mbeki, in his "I am an African", popularized it when he became South African President. "Thabo Mbeki populated it with an intention of advocating for self-determination, unity, identity, development, and transformation of political and economy of the continent. The envisioned statement was to see Africa as a unitary continent that could fight imperialism and capitalism which were seen as enemies of development from an Africanism perspective. The dream was however not realized due to the influence exerted by the western [states] on other states in Africa and that affected development in Africa."² African

¹ See <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/africa?enrollment-max=21406> accessed on 02/04/2024

² Phemelo Olifile Marumo and Mompoti Vincent Chakale, "Mbeki on African Renaissance: A Vehicle for African Development." *African Renaissance*, 15 (4, 2018):173-174.

Renaissance has however waned since the 'New Partnership for Africa's Development' (NEPAD) in Africa emerged. African leaders traded it for African Renaissance given the fact that NEPAD had Western funding and support. Most of African scholarship ignored it. European Renaissance ushered a lot into human culture that are still influencing us today. Jostein Gaarder says the Renaissance was a rich cultural development that began in the late fourteenth century. It led to the re-born humanism. "After the long Dark Ages in which every aspect of life was seen through divine light, everything once again revolved around man. 'Go to the source' was the motto, and that meant the humanism of antiquity first and foremost."³ Humanism, the reformation and counter-reformation, late 16th and 17th scientific revolution and the explorations of the so-called new world and the continent – Africa - that was called 'dark' by European 'explorers' which ultimately culminated into the slave trade and slavery in Africa and later, missionary incursion into Africa as a veritable basis for colonisation, were very remarkable events that shaped human civilisation for Europe for the good, and distortions in Africa in ways we now know it

The Theoretical Framework: Francis Bacon's Distempers of Learning

In philosophy, the Renaissance birthed the Modern period that produced Francis Bacon (1561-1626). Apart from being a major proponent of the inductive method of research, Bacon critiqued the system of learning in Europe. Two of his best known works are "*The Advancement of Learning* and *Novum Organum*. In what he personally called the 'great instauration' in the spirit of the Renaissance, he noted that his objective was the total reconstruction of the sciences,

arts and all human knowledge. Bacon's immediate intellectual patients were Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and by extension, others institutions of learning in Europe. According to Stumpf, Bacon levelled fierce criticisms against the reigning schools of philosophy, denouncing them for their slavish attachment to the past. He escalated the discontent against medieval philosophy calling for a break with the stronghold influence of Aristotle. He pointed out what he called the 'distempers of learning' and the *idols* that proceed from the mind, which "are not sincere, but of an ill and corrupt nature." Three distempers of learning enunciated by Bacon are fantastical learning, *contentious* learning, and *delicate* learning. They were the vices or major diseases of learning, distorting knowledge.

In fantastical learning, people concern themselves with words, emphasising texts, languages, and style, and "hunt more after words than matter, and more after choiceness of phrase ... than after the weight of matter." Contentious learning is even worse, he said, because it begins with the fixed positions or points of view taken by earlier thinkers, then these views are used as the starting point in contentious argumentation. Finally, there is delicate learning, wherein earlier authors, who claim more knowledge than can be proved, are accepted by readers as knowing as much as they claim, and this accounts for the acceptance of Aristotle, for example, as the dictator of science. These three diseases, he argued, must be cured in order to relieve the mind of the errors they engender.⁴

In this paper, Bacon's articulation and critique of learning has been adopted as a basis for a critique and appraisal of

³ Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie's World: A Novel of the History of Philosophy* (New York: Berkeley Book, 1991):197

⁴ Samuel Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problem*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994):221-222.

education in African today. The educational enterprise in African is today full of 'distempers' and 'slavish attachments.' There is a direct way the distempers Bacon correlates with the African educational system. These are the current distempers of populism, conformism and dogmatism and blind reliance on Western expertise and scholarship.

Foundational and Conceptual Problems of Education in Africa

The African educational system is burdened with *foundational* and *conceptual problems*. Foundationally, the superstructure of the African system stands on a wrong plank. Conceptually, there is the need to re-articulate what relevant education means in the African contest. The question, what is education has no acceptable univocal definitions. However, a few working definitions and characterisation of education may serve our purpose here. The education process is first informal, and later formal. Nature was man's first very stern teacher. Yet, in spite of all her harshness, through dangers and rewards, sufferings and satisfactions, nature succeeded in awakening her pupil's vast creative capacities. Nature, having achieved its purpose retired for 'culture' to become man's educator. Since then, culture has been tireless, unrelenting in the business of educating man.

Two dimensions in the process of education exist thus: (i) the 'transmitting' and 'receptive,' and (ii) the 'active' and 'creative' aspects of education. The former pair constitutes the impartation of the traditions, skills, insights, and accumulated values of the past. Without this learners will be hapless and worse unschooled human ancestors. This process makes learners to appreciate dependence on the society and culture. They are linked with the past and the

values that confer humanity on learners. The 'active' finds its source in society, on which it is grounded. The 'creative', is profoundly sensitive to social influences. Nevertheless, it spontaneously wells-up from the development and free play of the highest capacities of learners. Here, the mind exist its shell and curiosity to wonder, observe, and examine phenomenon. It objectifies the world before it (i.e. the mind). As Immanuel Kant would put, 'the starry sky above and moral law within man...' Here, the truly educated man audaciously dares to venture beyond known frontiers into bringing about the creative, even if unknown outcomes issue out of their education. There is no fear of experimenting, of novelty, or of adventure. Its outcome is expressed in innovation, creativity and life skills of the educative outcomes.

Consequently, education, for our purpose may be defined as follows: R.S. Peters says it is "the transmission of what a society considers to be worthwhile."⁵ Farrant views it "as the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of the community to which a person lives."⁶ Again, Immanuel Kant equates it with 'enlightenment' thus:

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-impose minority. This minority is one's inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. *It is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in the lack of courage and determination to rely on one's own understanding and not another's guidance. Thus, the motto of the Enlightenment is: Have the courage to use your own understanding!* Idleness and Cowardice are the reasons why so great a part of mankind, after nature

⁵ Andrew Uduigwomen and Karo Ogbinaka ed., *Philosophy and Education: An Analytical Approach* (Lagos, Joja Educational Research Publishers Ltd. 2011):7-9.

⁶ Andrew Uduigwomen and Karo Ogbinaka, ed. *Philosophy and Education: An Analytical Approach* (2011):7-9.

has long since released them from the tutelage of others, willingly remain minors as long as they live; and why it is so easy for others to set themselves up as their guardians. It is most convenient to be a minor. If I have a book to reason for me, or a confessor to act as my conscience, or a physician to prescribe my diet, I need not take any trouble myself. As long as I can pay, I do not have to think. Others will spare me the tiresome necessity.⁷

From this Kantian view, we can discern flaws in the educational process in Africa. What Kant says, of the man who 'out of idleness' and 'cowardice' refused to free himself from his self-imposed minority', is also true of an educational system that has refused to equip its learners to be freed from this disease. There are social institutions – governmental and non-governmental – that have 'set up themselves to be guarded and guided by others. For in Kant words, 'It is most convenient to be a minor!' African institutions 'have elected to enjoy the dishonourable ease of the life of minors'; 'when [where] they have since been released from the tutelage of others.' Kant says the failure to freely use understanding, out of the lack of a *sense* of 'courage', is the reason for our self-subservience and alienation, characteristics that are antithetical to the Enlightenment's motto: 'Have the Courage to use your Understanding!'

On the Relevance of Educational Policies

The sad existential reality of economic dependence, poverty, dysfunctional political system, over-reliance on Asia, Europe and the US calls for a scrutiny of education in Africa. African academics and political leaders tend to share a common ground on the purpose of education. The *National Policy on Education* of Nigeria has

laudable goals and objectives. They include: A free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.⁸ Unfortunately, the Nigerian educational reality negates the above five points. We may ask rhetorically: Is Nigeria not an un-free, undemocratic, disunited, weak, dependent state with a monolithic economy? Are Nigerians not among of the poorest people in the world? Are the opportunities for Nigerians not limited for majority of citizens to whom political power is inaccessible? The foregoing is true of most African States? As a prerequisite to achieving the above, the Nigerian *National Policy on Education* stipulates the 'promotion of enabling attitudes' that includes: Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual; Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions; Moral and spiritual principles in inter-personal and human relations; Shared responsibility for the common good of society; Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children; and acquisition of functional skills and competencies necessary for self-reliance.⁹

Paradoxically, today, Nigeria enmeshed in known national problems, and challenges that an adequate and relevant educational system ought to have solved. Nigeria is a state searching for solutions from foreigners and the West. She, like most African states, lacks faith in the products of her educational system. Most of African are very proud and enthusiastic *partners* in the 'The New Partnership for Africa's Development' project put in place in October 2001, 'aspiring' to be part of the BRICS economic bloc. African States scramble for external 'peer reviews.'

⁷ Karo Ogbinaka, *A Window into Philosophy* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd, 2010):110.

⁸ FGN, *National Policy on Education* (2014):2

⁹ FGN, *National Policy on Education* (2014):4

Unfortunately, not even NEPAD could offer anything better than the local African development initiatives. For example, for the purposes of its short-term goals, NEPAD's target is the International or Millennium Development Goals' (IDGs or MDGs'). Section V, paragraph 68 of NEPAD's document states thus: To ensure that the continent achieves the agreed International (i.e. Millennium) Development Goals (MDGs) and to increase African integration.¹⁰ Now, on education as in other spheres, NEPAD has the following to offer: (1) To achieve and sustain an average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of above 7 per cent per annum for the next 15 years and (2) to ensure that the continent achieves the agreed International Development Goals (IDGs), which are to: reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half between 1990 and 2015; enrol all children of school age in primary schools by 2015; make progress towards gender equality and empowering women by eliminating gender disparities in the enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2005; reduce infant and child mortality ratios by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015; reduce maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015; provide access for all who need reproductive health service by 2015; implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005, to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015.

The expected outcomes of the strategy are “economic growth and development and increased employment, reduction in poverty and inequality, diversification of productive activities, enhanced international competitiveness and increased exports. Finally, it recommends increased African integration.”¹¹ To achieve and sustain an average Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

growth rate of above 7 per cent per annum for the next 15 years.

¹² These objectives are largely paper-statements. What has been achieved many years after is the socio-political reality of African today.

Beyond Western Imposed Panacea

An earlier point on a major problem facing education in Africa is one that is conceptual. The conceptions of education of most African States are neither integrative nor coordinated from the lowest to the highest echelon of the school system. There exists very conflicting 'meanings of education' among the transmitters (teachers), the receivers (learners) and other stakeholders (government and the larger society). The effect is that of confusion, the inability to accurately assess the progress and recorded failures. For example, O. A. Bamiro states that:

Analysis of the state of the Nigerian nation shows a nation with very low industrial competitiveness and poor implementation of its development initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), etc. The issue is not so much our rather low rating on all the development indices, but the fact that we do know for a fact that things are really bad. And it should not be so. It is argued, among several other initiatives, that our universities will have to become agents of development to help the country face the challenge of development. To achieve this, and thereby ensure their relevance, it is posited, in agreement with the federal government intervention policy, that

¹⁰ NEPAD (IV, 2001): 69

¹¹ NEPAD (IV, 2001): 69

¹² NEPAD, 2001.

our universities transform into world-class with respectable global ranking. ... The key stakeholders will have to focus on three factors: one, *staff and students quality*; two, *resource in-flow* to ensure the performance of the fundamental function of teaching, research and innovation; and three, assurance of favourable governance.¹³

Stakeholders have reduced the school system to be 'certificate' givers for 'jobs' and no more. The crucial question institutions of learning in Africa must provide answer to is what job can learners secure? The answers determine how each area of study is funded and how universities brand courses. For example, if 'History' as a course of study does not appeal to the society, then 'History and Strategic Studies' or 'History and International Relations' will do; 'Geography' may be re-labelled 'Geography and Tourism' or 'Geography and Town or Regional Planning', yet we may have 'Geography and Remote Sensing', if 'Geography and Transportation' does not sell in the marketplace. Universities' certificates must have job-value. The university in Africa has accepted the reality of the fact that she has never occupied the position of being an agency of change in the African society, unlike her counterpart in Europe. Elsewhere, outside Africa, the 'indigenous' university system is the centre of research for new, innovative and revolutionary ideas and orientation – both in science and culture – for its host community. At least, the COVID-19 experience revealed this about European universities and research centres.

From inception, this role was never given to the African University. The African society is an 'expatriate' dependent one. Consequently, the African teacher does not

set out to influence a culture and attitude of development and creativity on learners. Learners are perceived to be people that are being 'certificated' *into* the job place and no more. The teacher is not a partner in development, but to earn a salary/living. So, even though the Nigerian *National Policy on Education* flags two 'faiths' – faith in the power of human knowledge and faith in man's ability to make rational decisions.¹⁴ Unfortunately, these 'faiths' are not pragmatically put on the African learner but on foreign contractors, economic experts, etc. Consequently, medical tourism, seeking education in foreign universities by the elites, etc. are not considered unpatriotic acts. Is it that Nigerians, Ghanaians, etc. cannot design and build sports arenas, roads, skyscrapers, etc.? Must Africa states rely on Western funders, creditors and economic experts to proffer solutions to African problems given her huge deposit of natural resources? When, if not now?

In answering such questions, one cannot but re-flag Kant on how a people, in refusing to use their understanding, due to cowardice and lack of courage, confine themselves to the minority and thereby give willing 'guardians' the opportunity to control their lives. This is self-surrendering one's independence. Beyond 'trivial' things such as paying huge bills in foreign currencies for foreign football managers across the face of the African continent, some African states' national budgets are even taken to Europe and the United States of America for *experts'* contributions and advice? What is so 'scientific' and 'technological' in economics and management that the African society cannot have 'faith' in a University of Lagos professor and graduate, but paradoxically have great 'faith' in the expertise of the Oxford, Cambridge,

¹³ Olufemi Adebisi Bamiro, "Nigerian University System and the Challenge of Relevance," *Convocation Lecture Delivered at University of Lagos, Nigeria* (January 12, 2012):2-3.

¹⁴ *National Policy on Education* (2014)

Harvard, etc. trained? Academics must be self-critical in order to make progress. The African scholar has a task to redefine the meaning of education in Africa and to further make this meaning 'meaningful' to all stakeholders. Unless the African scholar is conceptually clear on what education is they are sure to miss the mark.

The Foundational Problem in African Educational System

The other identified problem is foundational. However, it depends on solving the earlier one. The current formal system of education is extrapolated from African indigenous system of education. Its foundation is European. Its relevance and outcomes is appraised on basis of non-African standards. The African educational sector can only be well-scored when it brings itself to bear on local relevance. If it must be relevant it must be creative. A creativity educational system must meet the needs of immediate local society. Transmitting the results of foreign scholarship to the society, training learners on latest technologies that are created for the needs of the West first, before the 'rest of the world' and recommending the best foreign experts that are capable of 'fixing' African problems, etc. are definitely not the 'creativity' that is required of a relevant system of education. Unfortunately, the African trained fails here when challenged to address the problems of the African society.

What must be recalled here is the other dimension of the process of education called the 'active and creative' aspects of education. The emphasis of most African universities has been unduly one-sided. Teaching - the transmitting and receptive - dimension has over shadowed and overtaken the aspects of *problem-centric*

research' as well as the 'active and creative' dimension required of the system. Even when researches are carried out in African universities, it is to enhance the emoluments of researchers.

The basic aim of education, according to Salami, is to make the younger one's self-reliant adults in order to create continuity and development in such communities... Ki-Zerbo contends that education should be seen as the most viable weapon that could be used to perpetuate, modernise and propagate the culture of any given community. Indire, *et al*, submit that education in its true sense should be seen as "the totality of experience in response to nature and the environment."¹⁵

African problems challenge the creative aspect of the African school system; it is call to interface the African problem for locally relevant/appropriate solutions. Yet, within the system, there are many impediments to creativity. The system itself strives on dogmatism. The best pupils are those who are conformists. Therefore, only learners capable of regurgitating what they learnt are adjudged to be the best students. Students are seldom allowed any freedoms. School tests worship the 'cult of objectivity'. And this is how Jacob W. Getzel and Philip W. Jackson would express it in their book, *Creativity and Intelligence*.

While these tests have a certain value, they also have many defects and limitations. Among these is the fact that while they can test intelligence in terms of the ability to recall and present factual knowledge, they are deficient in the discovery of 'creative talent' The great danger is that, in their stress on the intelligence tests, our schools turn out 'quiz kids' who are virtually walking encyclopaedias,

¹⁵ Andrew Uduigwomen and Karo Ogbinaka, ed. *Philosophy and Education: An Analytical Approach* (2011):210-216.

but who do not really know how to think constructively and creatively.¹⁶

Unfortunately, this is not any different with those who instruct African students. The best academics are also the conformists abiding by the rules of the system in order to win research grants whose theme or research problems are determined by funding agencies. Researching on the scourge of malaria, poor power and energy supply, collapsing production sectors, reliance on imports, poverty, failing socio-political institutions, etc. are not on the top burners of these research/grant issuing agencies.

Radical academics are stereotyped as deviants. Today's academic freedom does not allow a professor to be critical of public officials and policies, even against their universities' administrators. Research case studies are better appreciated if they are foreign; this being a sure route to avoid trouble and saving the *researcher's* neck from academic guillotine. The African university's Vice Chancellor would likely 'take note' of any academic that boldly flags the distempers inherent in their university system. Today, there exists academic 'giants' who have not availed their shoulders for others to mount exist. Yet, Isaac Newton noted that he could see farther and clearer than others before him because he was standing on the shoulders of giants.

The university system is constantly pulling out professors with fanfares, but not noting the fact that these so-called great academics have not replicated themselves for the benefit of posterity. Where are the *Magus Opuses* of those celebrated as our great scholars in Africa? The population is waning! How many doctoral scholars were they able to produce during their long and fruitful career? Are the "books" used to shape the minds of African learners not largely foreign? How shameful is the fact

that there are more Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Princeton, Indiana, etc. universities publishers/presses' books in the African universities' bookstores than those locally published by the African Universities' Presses. African academics are more or less glorified sales representatives of Western authors and publishers with the African students as their customers? Is the African academic not promoted based on the 'quantity' rather than the 'quality', and the 'foreignness' rather than the 'localness' of their research publications and findings? This is clearly the meaning of worshipping in the 'cult of objectivity' as espoused by Francis Bacon's distemper of learning.

Another problem that is a consequence of the above is the fact that the entire university system is almost disconnected from its foundation. Over the years, it has refused to interact with its local environment. Its usefulness and meaningfulness only appeal to those who wear its 'gown' as it has ignored those who live in 'town'. However, the 'gown' is living in a castle of self-delusion and illusion. The 'town' has come to term with the fact that the gown's sole purpose is its being an institution set up for its (the town's) cultural aggrandisement and no more. Of what local relevance are African universities if not perhaps remand homes/institutions where the African youth is hosted for a few years until they grow to become employable adults!

Not connecting with the African system of education (derided as *informal education*) – the apprenticeship method – has done a lot of harm. African communities depend on the so-called 'untrained and uncultured' for their meaningful living. They depend on the 'untrained' to fix expensive cars and household apparatuses, they depend on the 'untrained' tailors to design clothes, even make academic 'gowns', etc. African people are treated, fed,

¹⁶ Jacob W. Getzel and Philip W. Jackson, *Creativity and Intelligence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957):53.

sheltered, even 'trained', etc. by the 'unschooled medics, farmers, hunters, fishermen, builders, masons, etc. that never experienced the four walls of its Ivory Towers. Unfortunately, whenever these sectors have problems, the African university expert is as helpless (and indeed useless) as they are. What has our school system done to solve the food, debt, social, crises, etc. in Africa? A system that has refused to improve the lot of its environment can be of no good to the locals. This is the dilemma of the African school system. Hence, its low rating as it pertains to societal relevance

African universities may have had some relevance in the past. Things would have remained so if its stakeholders were a little proactive, rather been conformist and dogmatic. There was a time, between the 1960s and early 1980s, when training in the formal system had job value. Then a university degree clearly guaranteed its products placements as civil servants, and in other 'white collar' jobs. This was an era education preserved this meaning for learners and their sponsors. Nevertheless, this is ideally not the sole traditional role of education and the university; but this perception of education has not changed. The universities are consequently under pressure to sustain the status quo. The school system must however redefine its task in order to re-image itself for local self-relevance. Today, the system is of doubtful global relevance when it comes to areas of advanced creative researches on, for example, space, HIV/AIDS, COVID, Genetic engineering, Ai revolution, medical transplants, ICT/Informatics, etc. Unfortunately, the local relevance of the African educational system, as already pointed out, is doubtful. Even in the liberal arts, the African university's scholar is found wanton. How many years will take African

scholars to replace foreign literature on basic introductory courses that are taught in African universities? India has since succeeded in this task. Where are our academic journals and of what quality are they?

The Question of Relevance - Minimizing Indigenous Development Initiatives

Most African States and the African Union (AU) have a good number of development initiatives. Nigeria has many development initiative/plans, always replacing them as soon as they are unimplemented and expired.¹⁷ Most development initiatives are have roles for education if the nation is to become developed. Any development initiative that is not locally initiated in content and drive is bound to fail. It would also make the entire educational architecture of African States irrelevant. This is the faith of NEPAD and many other foreign driven initiatives.

In 2012, Professor Olufemi A Bamiro listed a good number of steps that would make the university system relevant in the society. Unfortunately, he did not refer to the Nigerian *National Policy on Education* and local African based development initiatives. In a very crucial aspect of Professor Bamiro's lecture, he stated that:

It is also pertinent to examine some of our development initiatives and the expected role of our universities system as agents of development through research and innovation. Notable projects, programmes, declaration, etc. addressing issues of development with which African countries are engaged are: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), aimed at poverty reduction over a stipulated period of time with

¹⁷ See Oghenekaro Ogbinaka, "NEPAD: Continuing the Disconnections in Africa?" *Journal of Pan Africa Studies*, vol. 1, no. 6, Amen-Ra Theological Seminary, (Los Angeles: 2006):4-27.

globally defined measurable indicators of progress; the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD); the Blair Commission Report for Africa; and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) targeted at repositioning Africa in the world economy. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of WSSD identified during the Summit process. The three pillars of sustainable development as the *economic, environmental, and social pillars*, and emphasized the fact that science and technology must be placed at the heart of policies to promote sustainable development.¹⁸

Therefore, from design to implementation stages, there is the need to involve the African university as a major player.

Conclusion: Tasking African Universities on Home Grown Development Initiatives

The important point in Bacon's view, and which have been stressed, is that education is both the transmission of knowledge and a process put in place to build up the creative aspects of learners. The 'transmissive' aspect of education guarantees continuity. Its creative aspect destroys dogmatism. The creative aspect guarantees the progress of society. This way, we distinguish 'training' from 'education.' There seems to exist enough 'educational theories and methods' to enhance learning. Unfortunately, such do not exist for creativity to be achieved. It is also unfortunate that whereas one is better positioned to offer reasons why creativity is impeded within our educational system. Yet one is handicapped to proffer theories or methods to promote creativity.

A situation in which there is a lack of aim and goal for education, creativity is

impeded. Blind conformism (by the academic community) to foreign-generated theories, especially of 'man', 'society', and 'political economy' as well as the anti-research and intellectual culture perpetuated by authoritarianism and dictatorial culture, affect creativity. In other words, academic freedom and academic democracy provide the enabling environment for true education to take place.¹⁹ In his Nobel Prize winning work, *Education and the Good Life*, Bertrand Russell rightly noted that 'education is the key to the new world.'²⁰ Education is man's best hope in his quest to live a good and worthwhile life. Education can definitely not solve all human problems but it does address all human problems by actually confronting them. Human problems are as global as they are local, and any system of education that is disconnected from its environment is not worthy of being called 'education.'

What is to be done!

A fortunate situation we have found in the African case is the fact that there exist many developments' documents that are either locally and or foreign driven. Africa's underdevelopment is not caused by lack of locally grown development initiative. It has been largely one that lacked pragmatism and a political will to implement such development master plans. Given this, we recommend that a collaborative body of scholars in the fields of Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) be constituted to harmonise as many development initiatives as exist into a unified document for implementation and execution.

African educational institutions should interface African development process. This can be achieved if every University's academic and research departments are made to study these documents and spell out where and how they can contribute in

¹⁸ Olufemi Adebisi Bamiro, "Nigerian University System" (2012):27.

¹⁹ Andrew Uduigwomen and Karo Ogbinaka, ed. *Philosophy and Education: An Analytical Approach* (2011):340.

²⁰ Russell, Bertrand, *Education and the Good Life* (New York: Liveright Publication, 1970)

furthering the implementation of African development initiatives in the area of culture, science and technology by ways of research and innovation. Another area required for a relevant educational system in Africa is the harmonisation and integration of the African indigenous system of education with the existing Euro-modelled system. To achieve this, the narrative that the African system of education is *informal* and therefore an inferior system should be dropped. Africa has always had a robust and societally relevant system of education that exists side by side with the current Euro-modelled system. The African system largely operates as an 'apprenticeship method of learning' under a mentor-teacher. Its emphasis is on learning a trade and vocation until a time the learners becomes an independent experts in the said field of trade and vocation. Graduates of the African system are conferred with 'freedom' and equipped to set up the learnt trade and vocation as a self-employed entrepreneur possessing life-skills. This system is today the most useful and relevant in the Nigeria society today. The automobile mechanics/repairers, cobblers, masons, tailors, etc. are trained through this system. Efforts should therefore be made to harmonise this pre-colonial system of education with the currently revered Euro-modelled system which is a colonial legacy. The existing educational system should thus be de-colonised by infusing the African system of education into it.

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