

TOWARD AN AFRIC-ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION: An alternative strategy for the development of Sub-Saharan African countries.*

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INTRODUCTION

If there is a much debated issue today among scholars of the continent, it is the one dealing with the question of Africa's development. What Mazrui (1980) calls the "African condition" or what he terms the "paradox of African predicament as an underdeveloped continent¹" reflects the paradox of a whole continent which encapsulates a bountiful amount of world natural resources and is characterized by a diversity of cultures, knowledge and resources which are still lagging behind. In fact, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is an extremely rich region and abounds in potentials for development. It is said to gather one fifth of all known plant, mammal and bird species, and one sixth of amphibians and reptiles.

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¹ According to Mazrui, the African condition is characterized by six paradoxes which are: the paradox of habitation, the paradox of humiliation, the paradox of acculturation, the paradox of fragmentation, the paradox of retardation and the basic paradox of location."(Mazrui, 1980, p. xv-xvi).

As for the climate, it is diverse and highly variable ranging from extreme aridity of the Saharan deserts to the extreme humidity of the Congo rainforest (GUNI, IAU, AAU SURVEY REPORT, 2011, p. 2).

In addition, it is a region endowed with a rich historical and cultural heritage and gathers more than the half of the world reserve in minerals, mines and other raw materials. Moreover, the hydro-electric potential of Africa is estimated to about 30 to 40% of the world (KI-ZERBO, 1990:23). If we add to this the immense oil, gas and solar deposit, the SSA appears as a “garden of eden” compared to many developed countries. Despite this entire natural predisposition to development, many SSA countries like Mali have made very little progress toward economic recovery and human development. Mali has even dropped into the bottom category of least developed countries. This overwhelming paradox of the African continent has led certain thinkers like Kabou (1991) to wonder if the continent is really willing to achieve development.

In fact, in the past decade, with the exception of South Africa and a few countries which are making steady inroad toward sustainable development and educational reform, the rest of the SSA, and particularly Mali, continues to hover around the margin of the world economy. Actually, South Africa accounts for over 30% of the African continent’s GDP and the weight of its economy is felt through its entry in the global South regional trade cooperation like IBSA, (India, Brazil and South Africa) and BRICS (Brazil, India, China and South Africa) (LECHINI, 2011:216). In terms of educational and vocational trainings, South Africa is among the pioneers as illustrated by the diversity and richness of the curricula and the high role universities play as levers of development.

Beyond the question of the complexity of Africa's development, there is another one lurking beneath the surface of the different debates. It is the question of who is qualified enough or entitled to pronounce on the question of Africa's development; who has the *locus standi*; and who can best tackle and solve the huge challenges besetting the path of Africa's development? Who have the priority: Africans or non Africans? The question has divided the africanist researchers of the continent and abroad.

For a long time, it was widely accepted that only economists and politicians have this privilege. However, as Africans, it appears that no one is insensitive to this problem. The africanist community from the continent and the diaspora is widely affected by the downward turn of Africa's economic, political and social condition of the past twenty years as well as the marginalization of African knowledge and way of life in the educational system. In this dire context, everyone is entitled to bring his or her little contribution in order to make development, particularly what is called "human development" (WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT, 1994) not a mere concept or an ideal, but a genuine reality and truth for the Africans. It is in this framework that this article strives to address some alternative solutions to the thorny issue of Africa's chronic underdevelopment.

This paper tills the idea that there can be no sustainable development in the SSA countries without a sound and adequate educational system that incorporates endogenous values and behaviours as well as environmental preoccupations into the curriculum. In this regards, Sawyerr (2008), the secretary general of the Association of African Universities (AAU), makes an interesting comment: "In order to eradicate chronic poverty and achieve sustainable development, Africa has to be able to integrate

its indigenous knowledge with modern global knowledge and apply it in all areas of social life” (SAWYERR, 2008:1).

It is also our contention that the primary objective of all education (formal or informal) is not only to instill certain ethical values and knowledge, but it is also a springboard through which cultural and societal values are transmitted from generation to generation and valorized. Therefore, education in SSA should be a channel through which African history; experiences, worldviews, knowledge and overall values are taught, renovated and promoted for the best interests of the Africans. Education must reflect African cultural identity and personality. For this reason, schools and universities should be real engines of development as well as mediums of cultural empowerment. Therefore, education should be a stepping-stone to a better and healthy future for the Africans.

Besides, education should be a catalyst for change as well as instigate a genuine sustainable development instead of promoting exogenous values and being a mere prosthesis (KI-ZERBO, 1990:16). It is our belief that education must be functional in order to put forward the interests of the community. Unfortunately, countries like Mali have inherited an educational system steeped in the colonial ideology and biases. Therefore, schools and universities do not serve the communal interest as they bypass the urgent needs of the masses. In addition, there is often a mismatch between the trainings offered by the universities and the demands of the job market.

In this study, our main objective is to demonstrate that we can get out from the prison house of Afro-pessimism and mimetic educational policies that overlook our aspirations, needs, values and creativity by implementing new curricula that combine sustainable development with sustainable education. We call this curriculum Afric-ecologic. It is derived from our collective will, our historical

experiences, cultural diversities and foster creativity, dialogue, communality and a new ethical impulse toward our environment. Such curricula combine new technological tools with indigenous know-how and wisdom as well as ensuring a sustainable future for Africa and the whole humanity. It constitutes a springboard to lift us out of the quagmire of under development.

DEFINITION OF MAJOR TERMS USED

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

Development has become one of those fickle and complex theoretical puns of this millennium, (THOMAS, 2004: p.1) and ambiguous (GORE, 2000:795). Often associated with the idea of growth and progress, development has longtime been regarded as a measurable data with macroeconomic indicators like GNP (Gross National Product) and GDP (Gross Domestic Product). This neo-classical conception has been perceived by many to be biased and inhuman as it marginalizes other factors like the quality of living of the population, namely their access to health care systems, education, information, employment and a healthy environment. In the past twenty years, the term has been contested both theoretically and politically by many thinkers.

Consequently, recent debates in the economic circle such as the World Bank (WB) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have focused since the 1990s on what is termed human development and sustainable development. The latter is according to Brundtland, “that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UNESCO, 2008:2).

Besides, in the Human Development Report, it is stated that economic growth is only the means, whereas human development is the end. Consequently, they add that the “purpose of growth is to enrich people’s life” (UNDP, 1996:1). The interest of these new approaches to development theories, namely the shift toward notions of sustainability and humanity, is that they focus on the impact of growth on environment and humans instead of centering on figures and macroeconomic indicators of growth only.

Furthermore, the pro-growth and materialistic approach to development advocated by mainstream theorists has been challenged also by many leaders and thinkers in the South who have coined new concepts that take into account the well-being of the people. The Latin American concept of *Buen vivir* (the right to a good life) and the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) issued by the kingdom of Bhutan are presented as alternatives to the GNP and GDP which emphasize on growth and thereby downplay the anthropocentric dimension of development. These new concepts not only call for a humanization of growth and development, but they also require a holistic approach to the multifaceted issues and challenges that the question of development involves, particularly in SSA.

Interestingly, according to Myrdal (1974), development concerns the overall system of the society, not the economic sector only. Therefore, he defines it as: “the movement upward of the entire social system”. In the same vein, he adds this:

This social system encloses, besides the so-called economic factors, all noneconomic factors including all sorts of consumption by various groups of people; consumption provides collectively; educational and health facilities and levels; the distribution of power in society; and more generally economic, social, and political stratification (MYRDAL, 1974, p. 729).

In this context, development looks like a giant machine with many parts. It raises multidimensional questions which need to be analyzed from different perspectives and standpoints in order to find a global solution. It is a multifaceted process which concerns all the aspects of the social life. In his groundbreaking work, Walter Rodney has highlighted this multidimensionality of development in these terms:

Development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Some of these are virtually moral categories and are difficult to evaluate – depending as they do on the age in which one lives, one's class origins, and one's personal code of what is right and what is wrong. However, what is indisputable is that the achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole.²

What is education?

According to *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1989, p. 74), education is “a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills”. There is a close link between education and development as both aim to bring a positive change in the lives of peoples and societies at large. In this respect, both are geared toward the improvement of the human condition. So there is an intimate link between education and development. A change in one requires sometimes a revision of the other and vice versa. According to Rodney (1973), “Education is crucial in any type of society for

² RODNEY, 1973. Disponible in: <<http://www.marxists.org/subject/Africa/Rodney-wlater/how-europe/cho1.htm>>. Access on 22 aug 2005.

the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure. Under certain circumstances, education also promotes social change”³.

As far as Ki-Zero (1990) is concerned, he has called for an education that is rooted in endogenous values and that is capable of producing goods and services for the entire social uplift. He assigns education a dual role; it must be functional as well as being praxis.

What is a Curriculum?

A curriculum is often known as a regular course of study or training and their content offered at a school or university. The term derives from the Latin word “currere” meaning to “to run” (THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY, 1989, p. 152). Curricula include syllabuses and highlight the methods of learning, teaching and assessment. Curriculum can be official or formal when it is elaborated at a state level and identifies the program that must be taught and to what level in order to attain a certain standard. This includes leaflets, books, prospectus and hand-out.

It can also be unofficial and include extra-curriculum activities for instance. According to Eisner (1979), there is also an “excluded curriculum” which concerns what has been omitted intentionally or unintentionally. He calls this “the null curriculum”. In Malian educational system, particularly in the higher education, this corresponds to the indigenous values, age-old customs and spiritual matters that are often left out from the official curricula. Smith (1996), for his part, surmises that there are four ways of approaching curriculum theory and practice:

³ *ibid*: 57 of 129

1. Curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted.
2. Curriculum as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students – product.
3. Curriculum as a process.
4. Curriculum as a praxis.

Hence, a curriculum appears as an aggregate of many elements. It combines theory and praxis. It is also an ongoing process which aims to achieve a certain end. An afric-ecological curriculum is the combination of all these elements.

What is Afrocentricity?

Asante (1998) coined the concept of Afrocentricity at the end of 1970s. It is broadly defined as “placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior” (ASANTE, 1998:2). As an academic, political and cultural discourse, Afrocentricity stands as both a critique and a corrective of Eurocentrism (ASANTE, 1999:7). In this respect, Asante considers it as “a moral as well as an intellectual location that posits Africans as subjects rather than as objects of human history and that establishes a perfectly valid and scientific basis for the explanation of African historical experiences” (ASANTE, 1998: xii-xiii.).

Yet, since its inception, Afrocentricity has been attacked by both black and white thinkers because of its supposed radicalism and essentialism. According to Lefkowitz (1996), the leader of the anti-afrocentrist camp, Afrocentricity is no more than a “myth”, a “historical fiction”. Howe (1999) regards it to be a “psychological and cultural phenomenon rather than a pedagogical and intellectual one”. As far as Walker (2001) is concerned, an African American

historian, Afrocentrism is an expression of “decline” in the sense that it “deemphasizes politics”. Adeleke (2009), for his part, holds that the movement is essentialist and monolithic in its construction of African and African American identity and historical experiences.

If Afrocentricity as theory and concept has been subjected to sundry forms of criticisms, we believe that Afrocentricity used as praxis can be a way-out from the situation of marginalization, inferiority complex, poverty and underdevelopment of the Africans. Like Negritude, African Socialism, Panafricanism, we need Afrocentricity in order to change the gloomy picture of the continent. The aforementioned movements are according to Achebe, “props we have fashioned at different times to help us get on our feet again. Once we are up we shan’t need them anymore. But for the moment it is in the nature of things that we may need to counter racism” as well as underdevelopment (ACHEBE, 1990:44-45). Consequently, Afrocentricity and the endogenous development theory are still reliable “props” we can use in order to stand up in our feet. For the time being, the continent is still crouching, bending under the weight of debts, diseases, poverty, illiteracy, mismanagement, corruption, embezzlement and slavish mimicry. Ki-Zerbo (1997) has underlined this downfall of the continent in his Right Livelihood Award acceptance speech where he stated that although Africa holds only 15 per cent of the world population, it bears 50 percent of the most serious afflictions of the world. Beside the omnipresence of armed conflicts of many parts of Africa, the continent holds the notorious record of 50 percent of the world’s refugees and 50 per cent of its AIDS victims (KI-ZERBO, 1997).

Furthermore, the heuristic value of the afrocentric theory is that it dovetails perfectly with the project of Africa’s development. As the centrepiece of human regeneration, Afrocentricity is regarded to

be transformational, revolutionary and committed to the development of Africa as it destroys the person's images, symbols, lifestyles, and manners that are contradictory and destructive to personal and collective growth and development (ASANTE, 1988, p. 1). Its methods are believed to provoke change in the African's cultural, economic, social, political, educational and psychological situation. Therefore, its ultimate goal is human development. This viewpoint is shared by Modupe (2000) who argues that Afrocentricity "theorizes about the development of people of African descent, as African people". Consequently, Afrocentricity is presented by its creator as the most complete philosophical totalization of the African being-at-the-center of his or her existence. It is not merely an artistic or literary movement, or an individual or collective quest for authenticity; it is above all the total use of method to effect psychological, political, cultural, and economic change. The Afrocentric idea reaches beyond decolonizing the mind (ASANTE, 1998, p. 137).

It must be emphasized that Afrocentricity is not only a diasporic movement limited to the United States. In Africa, there is an afrocentric school led by the troika, Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemien, Ihechukwu Maduibuike and their followers. Like Asante, they have pleaded for an afrocentric study of African literature and education. Their analysis of the African situation is overwhelming.

In examining the criticism of African writing, we find that a significant number of African critics are eurocentric in their orientation, whereas they ought to be afrocentric. Such critics habitually view African literature through European eyes. Most of them would be ashamed to admit it, but the fact of the matter is that these African critics view African literature as an overseas department of European literatures, as a literature with no traditions of its own to build upon, no models of its own to imitate, no audience

or constituency separate and apart from the European, and, above all, no norms of its own (none at any rate, that would be applicable to contemporary writings) for the proper, the beautiful, or the well done (CHINWEIZU, et al., 1983, p. 3).

Like Chinweizu (1983) and his followers, many African writers and intellectual are pleading for a re-africanisation of African educational system. In this regards, they have noted that a shift from eurocentric approach o education to an afrocentric one entails the designation and implementation of new curricula adapted to African realities, the one that put their needs and vision at the center. In Africa, the majority of the syllabuses and curricula are modeled on that of Europe or the United States. It is high time curriculum planners implement new ones in tune with the realities of their countries. Ayi Kwei Armah, the Ghanaian novelist defends an afrocentric curriculum that focuses on the teaching of African past, particularly the Egyptian civilization as Africa's heritage in his two groundbreaking novels, *Osiris Rising: A novel of Africa past, present and future* and *KMT: In the house of life* (ARMAH, 1998, 2002). What Armah advocates in these novels is an africological curriculum.

What is Africology?

Africology is defined as the afrocentric study of phenomena, events, ideas, and personalities related to Africa (ASANTE, in MAZAMA, 2000:105). It is also presented as the “transgenerational and transcontinental afrocentric study of African pheneomena” (ASANTE, 1998:19). The africological methodological principles are the following:

1. The African experience must determine all inquiry;
2. The spiritual is important and must be given its due place;
3. Immersion in the subject is necessary;
4. Wholism is a must;
5. Intuition must be relied on;
6. Not everything is measurable because not everything that is significant is material;
7. The knowledge generated by the Afrocentric methodology must be liberating. (MAZAMA, 2003, p. 26).

In addition, an Africological pedagogy “expands the curriculum to include the valid achievements and knowledge of all societies and to use the voice of the community/culture itself to present a people’s histories and struggles for affirmation” (DEI, 1998: 201). Therefore, an educational system that combines an Africological methodology of research and teaching with an ecological awareness is likely to solve some of the most urgent problems of Africa, namely poverty, illiteracy, lack of clean drinking water, shortage of research on renewable bio-energy technology, famine, malnutrition, infant and maternal mortality. These encapsulate some of the important points of the MDG goals which many African countries have pledged to achieve by 2015.

THEORETICAL AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

This work is fuelled and given impetus by our reading of the theoretical works of Ki-Zerbo’s endogenous development paradigm and the afrocentric/africological pedagogical approach issued by Asante. In 1980, at the heat of the debate on the SAPs (Structural Adjustment Programs), Joseph Ki-Zerbo created the *Centre d’Etudes*

pour le Développement Africain (CEDA) in Ouagadougou about which he said:

CEDA conducts research which is actually rooted in our land for the purpose of determining one or more global hypotheses of understanding, liable to inspire action by Africans and capable of integrating ecological preservation, the social praxis and cultural identity, key sectors which are almost invariably treated as secondary in development projects.”(THE RIGHT LIVELIHOOD FOUNDATION AWARD, 1997).

CEDA was later replaced by CRDE, *Centre d’Etudes pour le Développement Endogène* (Center of research for the endogenous development). Ki-Zerbo promotes a social praxis that combines ecological preservation and cultural identity. Our conception of an afric-ecological pedagogy is modeled on these premises.

As a convinced Africanist, Ki-Zerbo had pleaded for the awakening and renaissance of the African continent during his acceptance speech of the Right Livelihood Foundation Award in 1997 where he said: that the Africa which the world needs is a continent able to stand up, to walk on its own feet rather than on crutches or on its head, in vacuous mimicry or escapism. It is an Africa conscious of its own past and able to keep on reinvesting this past into its present and future. It is an Africa which “lies on its own mat”, because “to sleep on someone else’s mat is akin to sleeping on the ground” (KI-ZERBO, 1997).

It is important to mention that Ki-Zerbo is one the most brilliant and committed scholar of Africa. As a historian, politician, educator and theoretician of African development, his lifelong battle has been how to move Africa from the margin to the center of the world economy through research and autonomous thinking. He has advocated an African way of development and education. As a fervent

historian, he rewrites African history from an African perspective and removes the veil from the fallacies and misconceptions that surround Eurocentric discourse on the history of his people.

But Ki-Zerbo is known mainly for challenging Western development theories imposed on Africa by the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The publication of his masterpiece, *Le Développement Endogène* (The Endogenous Development) challenges the Structural Adjustment programs (SAPs) which are responsible for the crumble of the African economy in many countries and the destruction of their social structure. These programs have failed for different reasons. On the one hand, they were not adapted to the socio-political and economic realities of Africa, on the other; they were tailored on Eurocentric models that were ignorant of African history and expectations.

Consequently, Ki-Zerbo advocates a development model centered on African cultural realities and experiences. He promotes what Amadé Badini names “self made development” (BADINI, 2000:2). Ki-Zerbo fosters the idea of an autonomous development program in Africa where the real agents and actors are Africans themselves rather than some so-called foreign experts. He defines the endogenous as follow:

L’endogène n’est ni un africanisme de plus, ni une néo-négritude. C’est un concept universel. L’endogène n’est pas l’indigène de naguère. (...) L’endogène n’est ni un trésor enfoui que nous devrions déterrer, ni une diapositive figée pour la contemplation. (...) L’endogène est un concept identitaire et progressiste central: un concept stratégique (KI-ZERBO, 1992:2).

The endogenous is neither another Africanism nor a new Negritude. It is a universal concept. The endogenous is different

from the former native. The endogenous is neither a buried treasure that we have to unearth nor a contemplative slide. The endogenous is a key progressive and identity concept: it is a strategic concept (KI-ZERBO, 1992, p. 2).

For Ki-Zerbo, there can be no endogenous development without an endogenous research. That form of research is predicated on a conceptual autonomy, an interdisciplinary and panafricanist approach to the African phenomenon (KI-ZERBO, 1992, p. 38)

Furthermore, Ki-Zerbo has also undertaken a radiology of African educational system in order to lay bare its blemishes and challenges in his *Eduquer ou Périr* (Educate or Perish). It is important to note that since the independence of many SSA countries, the issue of education for national development has been dealt with in epistemological terms, and most of the time, the legacy of colonialism and its educational system have marked the debate. Many thinkers have decried the inadequacy of this colonial education to the young independent countries. Because of its eurocentric orientation, the pedagogy was regarded to be faulty and alienating (CÉSAIRE, 1955; FANON, 1976; KI-ZERBO, 1990, 1992). This situation was lambasted by Ali A Mazui who argues that the educated Africans suffer from a kind of cultural bondage because they are still captives of the West (MAZRUI, 1978:13). As a matter of fact, some intellectuals have advocated an educational reform that lays a strong emphasis on teaching African cultures, languages and historical experiences (WA THIONG'O, 1981, 1993; ASANTE, 1998; ARMAH, 1995, 2002).

Today, the crisis that shakes African schools and universities dates back to the colonial era. In fact, according to Joseph Ki-Zerbo, the crumble of the African educational system was triggered by the colonial domination which was premised on exogenous values and

interests (KI-ZERBO, 1990, p. 16). In the same vein, Peteh P Ekeh asserts that the purpose of colonial history taught in African schools was to legitimate the European colonial rule of Africa (EKEH, 1975:98). As for Walter Rodney, colonialism is the root cause of the underdevelopment of Africa. Contrary to those who tend to put forward that Africa had benefitted from this system, Rodney remained convinced that “colonialism has only one hand”, it was a kind of “one-armed bandit” (RODNEY, 1973, p. 90).

All these thinkers have underlined the fact that the colonial educational system was devoid of functionalism in so far as it pays a lip service to the colonial master and reinforces his authority. In this respect, Walter Rodney comments: “The main purpose of the colonial school system was to train Africans to help man the local administration at the lowest ranks and to staff the private capitalist firms owned by Europeans” (RODNEY, 1973:60 of 129). This form of education that continues after the independence has been called by Walter Rodney “education for underdevelopment” (RODNEY, 1973). This view was shared by sundry Africanist thinkers like Hubert de Leusse who has spotlighted the alienating nature of this colonial education. His following analysis is very meaningful:

Sauf exception trop rare, l'école n'est donc pas à la hauteur de sa mission éducatrice. Par la rudesse excessive de sa discipline, au lieu de former les enfants, elle les déforme. Elle en fait des esclaves ou des révoltés. Elle ne leur donne pas le sens de la responsabilité personnelle, le goût d l'initiative. Elle n'en fait pas des hommes (LEUSSE, 1971, p.185).

Rarely has education fulfilled its mission of teaching. Because the discipline is rude, it fails to train the children. Instead, it has contributed to distort them. It has transformed them into slaves

and rebels. Hence, it has fallen short in its duty to instill into them the sense of personal responsibility and the passion for initiative. Education simply turns out to be a dehumanizing machine (LEUSSE, 1971:185).

In the same vein, Irele (2008) makes an interesting comment, he surmises that the western school was an instrument of a forced acculturation of the Africans in the sense that it cuts the students from their roots through its teaching of Westerns ideals (IRELE, 2008:53).

However, it is an irony that twenty years after the publication of Ki-Zerbo's seminal books, *Educate or Perish* (1990) and *Other people's mats* (For an endogenous development in Africa, 1992); and about twenty five years after Asante's *Afrocentricity* (1987), the continent is still bending beneath the yoke of exogenous and inappropriate development and educational policies. This situation is worsened in the past ten years by recurrent strikes of teachers and students alike; the emergence of overcrowded classes (as an outcome of the universal education promoted by Unesco); the political instability of many SSA countries; the incapacity of the governments to meet the demands of teachers and students as well as the schedules of repayments of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Consequently, many African schools and universities are shaken by a profound educational crisis that requires an in-depth assessment and reform of the entire curriculum and pedagogical approaches. The crisis is twofold: on the hand, there is no congruence between the taught curricula and the needs and demands of the labour market. On the other, these taught curricula are not in line with the basic aspirations, needs and expectations of the people. If the first situation is at the root of youth employment and

the brain drain, a new phenomenon that is gaining ground in the whole continent. The second situation has created a chasm between the elites and the masses, particularly in the rural areas. In fact, the elitist/solipsistic vocation of the present-day school system excludes millions of women and children of the rural areas as it fails to take into account the specific forms of training and schooling adapted to their situations.

More, it tends somehow to downgrade Agriculture, the linchpin of Food security. In this regards, Africans should emulate the example of the Barefoot College in India as well as The African Leadership Academy in South Africa.⁴ Institutes of this kind must be multiplied in the continent in order to attain the objectives of the DESD (Decade of Education for Sustainable Development) in Africa. As far as Mali is concerned, education suffers from a chronic disease that started in 1990s and became even worse in this decade (DIAKITÉ, 2000, p. 6).

Mali has implemented some curriculum reform. In 1962, there was a reform of education whose objective was somehow to link schools to life by being a channel through which the Malian personality and identity are promoted and rehabilitated. In addition, the role devoted to education was to participate in solving the socio political and cultural problems of the nation. So education was holistic and oriented toward praxis. The socio cultural realities were also highlighted (DIARRA APud PILLAI, 2001, p. 48).

⁴ The African Leadership Institute (ALI) was founded in 2004 by Fred Swaniker , Chris Bradford, Peter Monbaur and Acha Leke, but it the ALI opened only in 2008. It is a panafrican institute which receives students from all the African countries. It has an afrocentric curricula that focuses on leadership, African studies and Entrepreneurship as well as traditional disciplines. In: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Leadership_Academy>. Access on: 12 jul 2012.

Since the advent of the university in Mali in 1996, the educational crisis has moved from bad to worse. Poor salaries of teachers, lack of training of staff, shortage of a space of working and research for teachers and the absence of didactic materials added to the endless strikes of both teachers and students have completely degraded the educational system which is moribund today. We can say that the higher education is agony in Mali because of the numerous problems it faces today. Except some faculties, the majority of the curriculum in higher education is outdated, inappropriate and incompatible with the needs of the masses and the expectation of the global economy.

Consequently, every year, hundreds of students desperately flow into the job market with degrees that do not permit them to be competitive enough to find a good job. This situation has been decried by Ki-Zerbo who states that African universities and schools constitute a “factory of unemployment” in the sense that they train students destined to be jobless all along their lives (KI-ZERBO, 1990:54).

The other theoretical base of this paper is Molefi Asante’s afrocentric theory. In fact, Asante calls for a shift in the pedagogy as far as the African American students are concerned. He regards the American educational system as Eurocentric and ethnocentric in so far as it only puts into the limelight the achievements and values of the white community while bypassing that of the ethnic minorities like Blacks. Hence, Asante (1997), through his centric theory, harnesses a multicultural curriculum that emphasizes the achievements of all the components of the American society instead of the Whites only. He defines “centricity” in education as: “a perspective that involves locating students within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural

perspectives” (ASANTE, 1997:289). He adds that “the Afrocentric idea must be the stepping-stone from which the multicultural idea is launched” (ASANTE, 1997:291). This curriculum is germane to his perception of Afrocentricity which is delineated as follow.

A frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person. The Afrocentric approach seeks in every situation the appropriate centrality of the African person. In education this means that teachers provide students the opportunity to study the world and its people, concepts, and history from an African world view (ASANTE, 1997, p. 290).

Beyond the endogenous development and afrocentric theory, this study comes within the framework of the sustainable development program implemented by UN, particularly the DESD. It is important to note that the concept of sustainability along with that of good governance have become key theoretical concepts of this twenty one century. In December 2002, at its 57th session, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 57/254, declaring the period 2005-2014 the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) in order to highlight the chief role of education in achieving a sustainable development (UNESCO, 2007, p. 5).

In its Resolution 59/237, the United Nations General Assembly encourages Government to consider: “the inclusion... of measures to implement the Decade in their respective education systems and strategies and, where appropriate, national development plans” (Unesco, 2007:5). In this regards, the DESD ambitions to

[...] integrate values, activities and principles that are inherently linked to sustainable development into all forms of education and learning and help usher in a change in attitudes, behaviours and values to ensure a more sustainable future in social, environmental and economic terms (UNESCO, 2007:5).

As far as the African continent is concerned, The DESD was launched through the regional Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSAESD) at the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Biennial meeting at Libreville, Gabon, 27-31 March 2006). The Objective of the meeting was to help SSA countries meet the goals of DESD (UNESCO, 2007).

In order to bring into public awareness the importance of adopting a new development trend, mainly the one that stresses sustainability in the domain of education and training, the United Nations University Institute's symposium on Education for Sustainable Development in Africa (ESDA) held in Nairobi on 1st-2nd March, 2010 was launched in order

[...] to promote education for sustainable development in African countries by training professionals who may serve as planners, instructors, organizers, field development agents and practitioners for sustainable development in these countries”⁵.

This symposium which was followed by a workshop emphasized the urgency of educational reform in Africa. Because of poverty, lack of visionary policies about education and the absence of curriculum development in many parts of SSA, the application of ESDA agenda entails a certain number of challenges because of the overlapping scope of the crisis that touches the domain of education and training in these countries.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that certain universities are making steady progress toward the implementation and achievement of DESD. The University Gaston Berger in Senegal

⁵ United Nation University project on ESDA Report, 2010, p. 2.

(UGB), like many francophone African universities has implemented in 2006 The African and Malagasy Council of Higher Education's (CAMES) Resolution n°4 of the Council of Ministers which engaged the Universities within the CAMES space in the LMD (Licence (Bachelor), Master (Master) and Doctorat (Doctorate) degrees⁶.

This reform focuses on the harmonization and equivalence of degrees in the CAMES space. Its aim is to make university degrees in Africa more competitive. The UGB adoption of this reform has favoured the introduction of vocational training and the reform of the curriculum. Through its Contrat de Performance 2012 (AGREEMENT ON PERFORMANCE, 2012), UGB envisions to enhance the management and performance of the university through the increasing of the access to the ICT, and by connecting the university to the job market (CONTRAT DE PERFORMANCE UNIVERSITÉ GASTON BERGER, 2012.). Thanks to these strategies, UGB is ushering in positive changes in the development of its educational policies and system. After South Africa, Senegal appears as a pioneer in curriculum development and educational reform in Africa.

Yet, as far as the ESDA agenda is concerned, the lack of financial means and the shortage of teachers trained into the education for sustainable development constitute a serious impediment to the achievement of the MDG goals and sustainability in all areas of the academic life.

At any case, there is an urgency regarding curriculum reform in SSA, particularly in Mali in order to achieve the ESDA agenda. As a matter of fact, our paper calls for the implementation of an Afric-ecological education in order to transform schools and universities (public and private) into real engines of DESD application.

⁶ KOUDOU, in : http://www.events.aau.org/./jean_koudou_creating_AHES.

Presentation of the Afric-ecological education

An Afric-ecological curriculum is a model of teaching, learning and training that stands as a counterpoise to, and a visceral subversion of received colonial methods that bypass peoples' values and principles of knowing and positioning themselves in the universe. We think that if education cuts itself from the humus of the people, its cosmology, worldview, its ethics and laws, it becomes lifeless and less productive as the present school system. If everyone agrees that development is an ideal Africa shall strive to reach, the question one may ask is: Which development? And whose development?

In order to move out from the pitfalls of Eurocentric discourse, we advocate an afric-ecological pedagogical approach to education. Such pedagogy will put Africa and the specific needs and problems of the Africans at the center of the curricula. In addition to this, the Africans will be the actors and inventors of these curricula instead of receiving them from outside. We believe that an educational and development policy created for a snowy European country is likely to melt if brought and applied in an Harmattan African sun. For such a policy to function, it should be contextualized and adapted to the realities of Africa. It should meet all the demands and challenges of the educators, educates and overall community in order to be functional and productive.

Objectives

The objective of this new pedagogical method is to stir awareness about the importance of the reform of our educational system, particularly in Sub-Saharan African regions. As a prerequisite for the development of the continent, such a pedagogical method will put the interests of Africans (continental and diasporan) at the

center of the curricula. The African way of teaching, learning and other traditional cognitive methods will be analyzed and used as a valid framework for pedagogy.

Besides, the indigenous knowledge will be valorized and studied in the curricula and their preservation and implementation will be spearheaded by students and teachers for sustainability. In addition, the new approach will draw from the rich index of computer sciences and Information and Communication Technology. Besides, it will promote research in marginalized areas like Agriculture, Food security, Water and Soil Management, Food Science and Technology, Food Crop, Food Processing Industry, Architecture, research on renewable energy and technologies as well as traditional academic disciplines in order to provide the learners with a more range of choice in terms of career and job opportunities and make them more competitive and efficient at a regional and global level.

Vision

An Afric-ecological education has a Pan-Africanist, feminist and environmental vision. Its methods combine the afrocentric worldview and epistemology with a feminine/feminist sensibility. It combines regional exchange with diasporan experience. This Pan-Africanist dimension promotes team-actions, exchange, tutoring and monitoring students' learning. It promotes integration and peace among peoples, particularly in war-stricken area.

In addition, an Afric-ecological educational paradigm will place a strong emphasis on the importance of culture, particularly in dealing with sensitive issues like FMG (Female Genital Mutilation), AIDS/HIV and STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease). It will be gender sensitive, informative, inventive and rooted in the urgent needs of the people, the whole seasoned with a Pan-Africanist vision

and consciousness. More interesting, the new curricula will foster a strong ecological awareness as to rivet attention on the environmental issues affecting the continent as a whole. Among these knotty issues, desertification, deforestation, pollution, the silting up of rivers, the Global warming, drought, the mismanagement of waste disposal (electronic, plastic and the like) a new form of pollution that is invading the continent as a whole and causing devastating damage to the environment.

Besides, in the curriculum planning and teaching, the contribution and achievements of both men and women will be valorized as to achieve harmony, the backbone of the philosophy of *maat*. The latter is a pursuit of truth justice, love and ethical values. In terms of training, teaching and learning, it will foster exchange, creativity, entrepreneurship and the sense of responsibility and initiative. An africological pedagogical curriculum will emphasize the aforementioned elements and actively contribute to their teaching, learning and spreading through new syllabuses.

Goals

The goal of this new curriculum is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by making Africans agents and actors of their own development policies, but it also ambitions to focus more on the interests of the Africans by using endogenous values and techniques in the training. In order to meet the overall objectives of the MDG and effectively deal with all the challenges, the Afric-ecological pedagogy will emphasize the need for the relocation of certain universities and academic centers to local areas or to build new ones in those places.

Such decentralization is likely to provide a breathing-space to overpopulated capital universities as well as to contribute to the development of the local areas. In this case, the gap between capital

cities and regional ones will be reduced in terms of education facilities and job opportunities as well as transport and other infrastructures that permit and strengthen development. The rural areas will become the driving force of economy and the lever of change.

Mission

Its mission is to enhance sustainable development by increasing student's awareness about some ecological problems endemic to certain areas of the continent. Problems linked to the management of waste disposal (plastic bags mainly), and the deadly effects of pollution, unclean water, smoking, deforestation and other environmental issues affecting their regions by implementing new and practical syllabuses dealing with those issues. Students will be actors in those courses and will use extracurricular activities to find solution to their local problems. Besides, they can exchange with other students from Africa or abroad as to acquire a variegated experience and know-how in order to face those world-wide ecological problems. In addition, such a curriculum will put a special emphasis on career related learning experiences as to enable students to combine theoretical learning with practical activities. The aim is to stimulate students' generative knowledge by implementing new cognitive methods and learning.

Such a curriculum will take into account certain values like community and its importance. The notion of community is often equated with pinnacles of hospitality, generosity and solidarity, good manners that strengthen bonding among peoples. Courses should stir up those values and put them on the limelight. It should revisit and encourage ideas like the palaver tree for the settlement of dispute among neighbours.

In its framework for peace building and conflicts settlement, an africological pedagogical curriculum will take its inspiration from ancient African philosophies and wisdom like *La Charter du Mandé* (or the Charter of Kurukan Fugan) proclaimed by Sundjata Keita, the king of Mandé during his coronation in 1222. The charter encapsulates lessons that can help Africans to build a sustainable peace and human security. In its preamble, Keita stipulates:

“Every human life is a life ... there is no life more ‘ancient’”,
Or more respectable than another life, as no life is worthier
than
another life.”

For this reason:

“Every life being a life,
Every damage inflicted on a life needs repair.
Therefore,
Nobody may without reason oppose his neighbour,
Nobody may do his neighbour a wrong,
Nobody may torment another human being”.⁷

The charter of Kurutan Fugan constitutes an indigenous mechanism of conflict settlement and peace building among neighbours, nations and communities. In fostering and spreading such lessons in the curricula, they can serve as a brake to the gruesome “power mongery”, dictatorship, ethnic strife and the like that are taking place in many African countries. If we consider that today’s students are tomorrow’s leaders, instilling into them certain

⁷ KEITA, Sundjata. *La Charte du Mandé*, 2003. Disponible in: <<http://www.afrik.com/article5949.html>>.

ethical behaviors can prevent them from indulging themselves into bloodshed electoral conflicts, embezzlement and power greed.

Indeed, Africa needs to look into the past like the Sankofa bird of the Akan cosmology. Africa must return to the sources in order to find peace and improve the present as well as prepare a better future. This is one of the guiding principles of the Afric-ecological education. This idea is germane to what Mazrui (1986) said about the future of African countries. Mazrui holds that two imperatives will mark any social reform in Africa in the coming decades:

One is the imperative of looking inwards towards ancestry; the other is the imperative of looking outward towards the wider humanity. The inward imperative requires a more systematic investigation into the cultural preconditions of the success of each project, of each piece of legislation, of each system of government. Feasibility studies should be much more sensitive to the issue of “cultural feasibility” than has been the case in the past. Africa’s ancestors need to be consulted through the intermediary of consulting African usage, custom, and tradition. Since the world is becoming a village, Africa cannot just look inward to its own past. The contact with the twentieth century has to include sensitivity to the wider world of the human race as a whole” (MAZRUI,1986:21).

In addition, the new curriculum will be structured around the rewriting and re-imagining of the concept of nation and state. Such a vision will not be based on the colonial model, but rather, will consider the state as the compound, the community, the village. Because of the colonial legacy, many Africans (even in the intellectual circles) still consider the nation as a symbol of the colonial authority. As a matter of fact, many leaders do not hesitate to plunder it shamelessly.

Strangely enough, even the masses passively condone this plundering because the looters are believed to have taken their slice

in the big cake that is the state. Consequently, a new notion of state, nation and governance should be implemented. Such curricula shall foster the love of the nation as something belonging to everyone not the ruling party only. A new notion that combines Julius Njerere's African's socialism known as Ujaama and Wangari Munthai's ecological and womanist concerns.

Last, the new curriculum should have a nomethetic impulse, it must change the old laws and inert knowledge and replace them with new generative one. For this reason, the curriculum must inspire and enhance visionary attitudes from the students unlike the traditional method that often overlooks ingenuity and creativity. In traditional system, those who memorize their lessons are considered to be effective and intelligent and given higher grades. As far as ability, skills and other innate talents of invention, improvisation, and management are concerned, they are not given pre-eminence. An Afric-ecological curriculum should be combative and visionary. It should be daring, ambitious and open-minded. It should combine the power of men and the trickiness and seductiveness of women. It should mesmerize, cajole, impress, motivate and convince.

Challenges

Implementing an Afric-ecological educational system in SSA, particularly in Mali entails a certain number of challenges. The Oxfam report on education in Mali reveals a profound and overriding dysfunction of the overall educational system. It is stated that the MDG agenda, particularly education for all by 2015 is still a dream than a reality for Malian children because almost a million (900.000 exactly) children aged 7 to 12 years are out of school among which 60 per cent are girls (OXFORD INTERNATIONAL REPORT, 2009:7). The report has also stressed the poor quality of education

delivered in the schools due to the lack of good infrastructures and curriculum as well as the poor qualification of teachers themselves. Because of all these factors, the study shows that only 23 per cent of Malian adults and 29 per cent of them aged 15 to 24 can write and read correctly. These figures place Mali among the countries with the lowest literacy rate of the world (OXFORD INTERNATIONAL REPORT, 2009, p. 7).

In fact, according to Diakité (2000), education in Mali suffers from an endemic crisis that goes back to the 1990s. The increase in the number of students in the past decade has not been followed by equipments and the availability of didactic materials (DIAKITÉ, 2000:1). This situation is worsened by the existence of inadequate curriculum and the dearth of training of the staff, a situation that seriously affects the quality of the education, particularly in higher education. Consequently, many students want to stay at the university as long as possible in order to take advantage of the scholarship offered by the government not for the passion for education *per se*. (DIAKITÉ, 2000: 9). The absence of university libraries and the lack of access to the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by both teachers and students have diminished the quality and performance of the students.

In addition, the curriculum is outdated and disconnected to the current needs of the people. It carries some remnants of the colonial educational system even though there is the introduction since a few years of the national languages in the curriculum. In fact, according to Woolman, Mali has adopted a curriculum development whose objectives was to africanize the content and structure of the curriculum so as to suit local and national needs. This reform has consisted basically of restricting the primary school to nine years divided into three cycles instead of ten years like in the French

system. In the 1980s, the ruralization of school was meant to teach children some practical skills in economics, health, agriculture and husbandry. Today, the school is geared toward the vocational training. In this framework, it offers two trends in the high schools: academic education and technical skills (WOOLMAN, 2001:3).

Another huge challenge to the implementation of an Afric-ecological education is the fact that this study is embedded in a theoretical framework only. Given that a curriculum involves both theory and praxis, the realization of this new curriculum requires on the one hand an active participation of both teachers and curriculum planners; on the other, it entails the engagement of the governments of SSA countries as well as the NGOs and other partners. The shift from a theoretical base to a practical one implies a huge financial means and training of teachers and staff and the designation of new syllabuses. So, both students and teachers should be empowered in order to be able to design, monitor, assess and implement this new curriculum.

Besides, human development which is the aim of both DESD program and the endogenous development theory concerns the whole population, not elite only or a single sector of the social life. However, in Mali, only a few people really grasp the meaning and implication of this concept. Therefore, an Afric-ecological education will address the issue of poverty and illiteracy from the grassroots. It will develop joint projects whose aim is to sensitize and train the illiterate masses into issues of sustainability dealing with the preservation of the environment, the implementation of income generating activities, how to increase the productivity of agricultural output by using fertilizers that do not pollute the environment, etc.

In order to raise fund for this educational and developmental project from below, an Afric-ecological educational system will

create partnership with regional and international universities involved in these questions as well as NGOs and the DESD program led by Unesco. The Barefoot College in India is a good initiative of the grassroots' education and human development in the sense that its main target is the illiterate rural women. The Barefoot College is a non-governmental Organization (NGOs) founded by Bunker Roy in Tilonia (India) in 1972. Since 1989, it has been promoting solar energy through the electrification of many villages. The College trains illiterate or semi-illiterate middle-aged women from Third World countries into the technology of installation, repairing and maintenance of solar powered lightening systems. Once in their respective villages, these grandmothers become "Barefoot solar engineers" (Unesco, 2012). Creating in SSA a similar initiative that includes also young men and women who drop out from schools or who are illiterate will help achieve sustainable development in SSA, mainly in Mali. Indeed, one of the main problems of the continent is the access to electricity despite the huge deposit of oil energy of the continent.

There is also the challenge of globalization and competition. In this respect, Sawyerr (2004) writes: "Every society must have the capacity to generate, acquire, adapt, and apply modern knowledge if it is to take advantage of the opportunities and reduce the risks posed by the rise of the knowledge society". In the same vein, Mazrui (2005) argues that a university must develop three kinds of relationships if it wants to be functional. His analysis is the following:

In relation to the wider world, a university has three crucial relationships. A university has to be politically distant from the state; second, a university has also to be culturally close to society; and third, a university has to be intellectually linked to wider scholarly and

scientific values in the world of learning (MAZRUI,
MKANDAWIRE, 2005, p. 62).

Finally, as far as Mali is concerned, the implementation of an Africological curriculum with its emphasis on sustainable and human development is thwarted by the challenge of peace and human security, particularly in the North of the country. Since January, the northern Mali has been facing armed conflicts, rebellion, attacks from Toureg separatist groups and Islamic fundamentalists, a situation that has seriously affected the quality of education as many people have fled their places in order to find harbor in neighbouring countries. If education is the bedrock of all development programs, security is the pillar upon which everything is constructed. Without a sustainable peace, Mali can neither achieve the MDG goals by 2015 nor the ESDA agenda.

In addition, the poor economic and social situation of the past years worsened by repeated drought, famine, malnutrition, unemployment have severely curtailed the human development index as illustrated by the UNDP 2011 report on Mali. This report positions Mali among the countries with the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) of about 0.359. Therefore, Mali is 175 out of 187 (UNDP REPORT, 2011:1). HDI is a summary measure of long-term progress based on three dimensions of human development: long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent living standard (UNDP Report, 2011:1). All these problems constitute serious impediments to development as they affect the quality of education. However, without an education of high quality, nothing can be realized according to the following statement of Mazrui:

No university or research organization can be a first-class institution of learned inquiry if the training

schools that fed into it are all mediocre. In order to fully develop a university, a society has to develop the educational ladder as a whole. Qualities of education at the primary and second levels need to be sustained if the financial candidates for possible admission to the universities are to be of a high standard. The capacity to be curious and fascinated by ideas has to start early in the educational process. The spirit of intellectualism has to be nourished from primary school onward, but it can die at university level if mediocrity prevails (MAZRUI, in MKANDAWIRE, 2005:61).

Consequently, for Mazrui, intellectualism should be the foundation of education. The earlier it is instilled into the children, the better the quality of their education and performance. As we have seen, the implementation of curriculum reform involves sundry forms of challenges and roadblocks. Yet, despite the far-flung task of this reform, we are still convinced that it is the only viable solution to the development of SSA countries in general and Mali in particular.

RETHINKING THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: a prerequisite of development in the SSA

An afric-ecological education embodies the humanist and cultural ethic that is missing in the current curricula. Therefore, this article is a call for a re-africanisation of African educational system in order to take into account Africa's indigenous knowledge and developmental challenges. It is our belief that a curriculum that places a strong emphasis on the knotty issues of cultural empowerment of the Africans through a teaching and rehabilitation of their values, achievements and knowledge as well as highlighting the core environmental problems of our modern era is likely to

offer a glimpse of hope from the maelstrom of the overlapping developmental problems of SSA, mainly Mali.

CONCLUSION

This bird-eye view of the educational situation in SSA, particularly in Mali and the review of development theories reveal that the situation is really alarming but not desperate. We believe that there is no fatality regarding the current situation of the SSA countries. By implementing a sound educational and developmental policy like Afric-ecology, these countries can knock down all the problems and all the “unders” they face today in terms of human development. It is a well-known fact that the access to knowledge, information and all forms of education constitutes the very backbone of all development programs.

In diversifying the forms of training and education; in focusing on ecological preservation; in stirring awareness on the paramount necessity to think for ourselves and for our own benefit instead of adopting exogenous policies that cloak our interests; and in stressing the importance of agency, location and cultural rootedness for the Africans, the Afric-ecological educational policy is likely to lift us out from the quagmire of slavish mimicry and unproductive development programs.

Given that Africa is the oldest of the continent (it is the cradle of humanity) as well as being the youngest in terms of its population constitutes a tremendous potential for development and places Africa as the hope of humanity. In combining the experience and maturity of age-old traditions and wont; and the bloodstream of youth, the African renaissance preached by leaders like Mandela, Mbeki and Ki-Zerbo is heading on its way. The only hurdle is the

integration and unity of Africa in order to counter the “paradox of fragmentation” (MAZRUI, 1980). The Afric-ecology expands this panafricanist vision in its curriculum and training. Therefore, it appears as a glimpse of hope in actualizing African development despite the various forms of challenges and roadblocks that beset our path to sustainable development and economic recovery.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to discuss the paramount necessity to implement an adequate educational system in order to achieve sustainable development in the SSA countries with a focus in Mali, one of the poorest countries in the world with an endemic educational crisis. It is a truism that education is the cornerstone of development. In this respect, any strategy of development in SSA shall start with a change in the pedagogy. This reform implies not only a rethinking of knowledge production and teaching in Africa as to take into account the current needs of the masses, their cultural and historical experiences as well as their environmental problems; but it also involves a curriculum development which makes universities and schools spearheads of larger social transformations and communal uplift in order to attain the Millenium Development Goals as well as mainstream a genuine sustainable development. In this connection, this paper makes a case for the implementation of an Afric-ecological curriculum in order to deal effectively with the multidimensional challenges of development and education in the SSA, particularly in Mali. Such a curriculum has the advantage to combine an afrocentric perspective to teaching and learning with a strong ecological awareness. In addition, it is geared toward reducing inequalities between men and women, and between rural and urban women in terms of educational and job opportunities.

KEYWORDS: Development. Education. Curriculum. Afrocentricity/Africology.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é discutir a necessidade primordial de implementar um sistema educacional adequado, a fim de alcançar o desenvolvimento sustentável nos países da África Subsaariana (ASS), com foco em Mali, um dos países mais pobres do mundo, com uma crise endêmica educacional. É um truismo dizer que a educação é a base do desenvolvimento. A este respeito, qualquer estratégia de desenvolvimento da ASS terá início com uma alteração na pedagogia. Essa reforma implica não apenas uma reflexão sobre a produção do conhecimento e do ensino na África como também tem em conta as necessidades atuais das massas, de suas experiências culturais e históricas, bem como seus problemas ambientais, além do envolvimento de um desenvolvimento curricular que faz com que as universidades e escolas lancem grandes transformações sociais

para atingir os objetivos de desenvolvimento do milênio, bem como integrar um verdadeiro desenvolvimento sustentável. Nesse contexto, o presente trabalho faz um caso para a implementação de um currículo Africo-ecológico, a fim de lidar eficazmente com os desafios multidimensionais de desenvolvimento e de educação particularmente em Mali. Um currículo tem a vantagem de combinar uma perspectiva afrocêntrica de ensino e aprendizagem com uma forte consciência ecológica. Além disso, ele é voltado para a redução das desigualdades entre homens e mulheres e entre mulheres rurais e urbanas em termos de oportunidades de educação e trabalho.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Desenvolvimento. Educação. Currículo. Afrocentricidade/Africologia.