Management of Educational Sector in Crisis in Sub-Sahara Africa

Faith Maina, Ph.D
State University of New York, Oswego

Management of education in Africa and more so, in Sub-Sahara Africa is at a crossroad. The direction in which we will set our compass will determine whether our education systems will propel us into middle level economies or will stagnate and remain as the case study for poor underdeveloped economies. These are the struggles evidenced by all the sixauthors of this issue of the Kenya Administration in Education and Management (KAEAM) journal who clearly challenges educational management in the areas of embracing Information Computer Technologies (ICTs) at the institutions of higher learning, promoting gender equity in educational leadership and access as well as changing pedagogical practices to be inclusive to diverse learners.

Information Computer Technology (ICT)

It is broadly accepted that "access to ICT can contribute to economic development" (Avila, 2009, p.137). Yet, Africa in general, and more specifically, Sub-Sahara Africa continue to lag behind the rest of the world in terms of ICT access. In 2008, only "three percent of the world's internet subscribers were located in Africa" (Avila, 2009, p. 140). The most important factors attributed to this low rate of access include affordability, lack of fixed internet infrastructure and low level of ICT literacy. Pedro (2005) reminds us that University education has a responsibility to ensure the future graduates are well versed in the use of ICT, "since in a knowledge economy, such technologies are an indispensable tool of everyday life in the world of work they hope to enter" p. 399). Using ICT in the classroom has been shown to increase educational benefits because it helps trigger a change in teaching methodology that is more inclusive and learning is "based on research and interpretation and not merely on rote learning" (Pedro, 2005, p.407).   Yet, low access to ICT continues to be a problem in the institutions of higher learning in Sub-Sahara Africa as demonstrated by the study conducted in Nigeria by Uchedu (2012) reported in this issue. Uchedu (2012) argues that Nigerian Universities like many others in Sub-Sahara Africa are lagging behind in the provision of ICT facilities for education management and if the government does not take urgent action it will affect their efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. Uchedu (2012) makes an urgent plea to both the state and federal governments of Nigeria to provide access to ICTs so as to improve the effectiveness of university education.

Gender Equity in Educational Leadership

We know very little about the lives and careers of women in educational administration within developing countries (Oplatka, 2006). Even the few studies done in the field are women in leadership compared to men (Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan and Ballenger, 2007). Yet, the entry of more girls into schools in developing countries is assumed to increase their potential incidence in future administrative positions in education systems, "although some cultural and social factors might slow the process or limit the scope (Oplatka, 2006, p. 606). The barriers to career advancement experienced by women in developing countries seem to be determined by specific cultural and religious beliefs and values that define femininity in terms of marriage, housekeeping and child raising (Oplatka, 2006). Needless to say, women in administrative leadership positions in developing countries face many challenges. For one, "gender role

| Corresponding Authour Email: faith.maina@oswego.edu

stereotypes in educational materials, in the curriculum and in the school environment transmit gendered attitudes towards the role of girls and boys and engender negative self-perceptions in girls that could impede their personal development (Oplatka, 2006. p. 613). Secondly, heavy domestic responsibilities and husbands' resistance are identified as barriers to career advancement. Thirdly, the cultural social structure in which they live and work, coupled with many parents propensity not to send their daughters to secondary education makes it almost impossible for women to access professional or managerial positions.

However, things are changing, and for the most part, for the better. Chireshe (2012) study as reported in this issue found that Zimbabwe has responded to the call for gender equity in recruitment of female heads of schools. Out of a possible 16 schools targeted for the study, five had females as head of schools. Females were also reported to be excelling in managerial competence even though there was tremendous pressure to de-feminize or even to disaffiliate from other women just so they can prove themselves (Shakeshaft, 2007). Sang, Masila& Sang (2012) remind us that there is gender disparities in educational administration and leadership especially in secondary schools in Kenya. The study recommends an urgent address prevailing gender inequity in access to secondary school administrative opportunities in the country by the relevant stakeholders.

Makewa, Masinde and Mbuti (2012) study, also in this issue investigated the impact of various management styles employed by both males and females on student performance. The study concludes that head teachers need continuous professional development to horn their managerial skills as a way to enhance their instructional leadership.

Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches
While many countries in Sub-Sahara Africa have heeded to the call for access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality (World Education Forum, 2000), pedagogical approaches and practices have not changed to deal with the diversity resulting from mass enrolment. Ingubu &Kindiki (2012) study argues that accessibility to education has brought dilemma to the teacher and pedagogy especially in dealing with learners from low social economic status. However, the teacher is encouraged to adapt new transformative approaches to teaching includinglife skills training, experientialism, research and inquiry.

Girls, especially in Arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) continue to lag behind in performance. In 2000, FAWE posited in reference to girl education in marginalized districts in Northern Kenya that "gender sensitization using different media is crucial to getting communities to change their perceptions and beliefs about girls' education" (p. 23). That call seems not to have been heeded to because as Ngesu, Wachira, Mwelu and Nyabisi (2012) reminds us, girls from ASAL continue to lag behind in academic performance. The findings from this study indicated that the influence of socio-cultural factors such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), early marriages, nomadism, preference to boys especially in matters concerning education and long distance to school were the cause of this failure by girls to perform well in national exams. In the light of these findings, it is recommended that the parents and community should be sensitized on the importance of girl child education.

Conclusion

We anticipate that this issue of KAEAM journal will contribute some ideas on the direction we need to take in regard to management of educational systems in Sub-Sahara Africa. There is no doubt that we need to rethink of effective ways to embrace technology and make it accessible to our students if they are to become competitive in global knowledge economies. Likewise, the changing educational landscape calls for systems that respond effectively whether it is in the provision of gender sensitive environments, inclusive approaches to teaching as well providing access to technology. While these articles may raise more questions than answers, it is our hope that they undoubtedly provide some insights to build upon as we face the crisis of educational management in Sub-Sahara Africa.

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