

INVESTMENT IN THE HUMAN CAPACITIES AND THE SOCIAL CAPITAL IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: PERSPECTIVE OF EQUITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF POVERTY AND SECURITY

Introduction

With its high potential in wealth, Africa is today the continent of the future, but so that she can take advantage of it, she needs qualified human resources, because the problems of Africa will only be solved by Africans themselves, when they will have the required skills. That is why investment in education for equal access of men and women at all levels of education; including for vulnerable groups is a necessity for the formation of a human capital capable of driving the development of their countries. Only education will allow to evolve in a society which will be more and more dominated by the knowledge. But in spite of the granted efforts the African continent is struggling to ensure a full cycle of free, equitable and high quality primary and secondary education.

Access for all to a full cycle of primary and secondary education with relevant and effective acquisition.

The efforts made since the beginning of the millennium have helped to reduce the discrepancies between boys and girls in primary school, but inequalities remain important in secondary and upper cycles as well as in vocational training. If the access to education has improved a lot, the gains are not guaranteed, for example: Report N°. 2746 of the French parliament of 6 May 2015 shows that in francophone Africa the acquisitions in reading and understanding French, which should be ensured by the first two years of schooling, are noticed only in 8% of children from 6 to 14 years.

The comparable acquisitions in national languages, used in early schooling by a part of the schools, are obtained only in 3% of the children concerned. The expected results in calculation are obtained only by 9.5% of children, half of them not knowing how to read the numbers. The majority of Africans do not stay long at school. Indeed for sub-Saharan Africa the average duration of education is 9.7 years against a world average of 12 and 16.3 for countries with very high human development level. Thus, even if the children are schooled, they are many to leave the system prematurely without mastering the fundamentals.

It is not surprising that a large majority of the work force is without training and without formal professional qualifications. Thus, almost 80% of active Nigerians and 70% of active Burkinabe have no training and are affected by illiteracy.

The literacy, a requirement to survive in the world to come

In a world that is increasingly dominated by knowledge, access to information and technology will depend on the ability to read and write. Yet, the literacy rate increase very slowly in poor countries. It is less than 50% in many sub-Saharan countries with 49.7% in Senegal, 42.4% in Benin, and 31.1% in Mali. The progress remains very slow. Among women in Senegal, in 1960, 97% of women were illiterate and they are still today).

The combined effects of poverty and population growth form a constraint to solve the problems of education, training and illiteracy

Poverty

While poverty in the world is in constant decline, with a diminution of most disadvantaged

which passed from 29% in 1999 to 13% in 2012 and finally to 9,6% in 2015, in sub-Saharan Africa, extreme poverty still affects 32,5% of the population. Thus, Africa remains the only continent where the number of extremely poor people has increased. According to the Observatory of inequalities, this figure has increased from 210 millions in 1981 to 415 millions in 2011;

According to the last report of the UNDP on human development, no African country appears among the 49 countries with a very high human development, only 5 are among the 53 countries with a high human development which is 9.4%, and 11 are among the 42 countries with a medium human development, which is 26.82%; and among the 43 countries with low human development 38 are in Africa which is 88.4%.

Level of development of the African countries	Effectif			%
Very high human development Countries (VHDC)	0	49	1-49	0%
High human development countries (HHDC)	5	53	(50 à 1002)	9,4%
Medium human development countries (MHDHM)	11	42	(103 à 144)	26,2%
Low human development countries (LHDC)	36			
Unclassified countries (<i>Sudan and Somalia</i>) et PDHF	36+2	43	(145 à 187)	88,4%
Global Total	54			

Among the 25 poorest countries in the world, 21 are in Africa, which is 84% and it is interesting to make the link with the structural adjustment policies to which they have been submitted and which have limited the investments in the social sectors. Yet poverty is not a reason for not investing in education.

The facts show that those who have invested the most in education have harvested the fruits of it, and almost everywhere, the investment in public services have preceded the rise of the national growth.

When Sweden in 1842 have made schooling compulsory for all children, its Gross Domestic Product (GPD) per capita (\$ 926) was lower than the current per capita GDP of most sub-Saharan countries. One of the most striking examples is the case of Korea which has widely invested in education while it had only gained its independence in the late 1940. It has continued to widen the access to education despite its political instability and the war.

It had already made great progress in education in the early 1960s, when its GDP per capita was less than \$ 1,500. In five decades it was able to achieve quasi-universal primary education, at a high level of secondary and upper education.

The demographic issue

The African birth rate remains high especially in sub-Saharan Africa where the problem is particularly acute with a fertility rate of 6.5 children per woman. Pending the doubling of Africa's population announced in 2050, each year 15 to 20 million young people are expected on the labor market, which for the main part risk to be without qualification because of lack of funding for education and training. The deficit of resources is a risk for achievements in the education sector.

For example in Madagascar; the accomplished progress have experienced a stop from 2009 due to the reduction of the credit which passed from 21.1% of the budget in 2009 to 19.6% in 2015. The primary completion rate had progressed passing from 41.4% in 2003/2004 to 79.6%. From 2008/2009 it was noted a progressive drop to reach 68.5% in 2014. In this context of resources deficit, vulnerable groups are more at risk to be excluded.

Equal access to education: a way to break the vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion.

Education is a way to break the vicious circle of poverty. It is through equal access for all including vulnerable or minority groups at all levels of education and training that social inequalities will be reduced. Yet, because of the lack of adequate infrastructure, rural areas do not receive the same advantages as urban areas. The handicapped persons fault of availability of infrastructures, adequate equipments and qualified personnel do not have access to a quality education at all levels. Answers to these needs are possible by having strategies adapted to the specificities of each group.

Conclusions and recommendations

Massive poverty which the African continent face, can be solved only by the availability of qualified human resources for the development of its enormous potential for wealth, and this inevitably requires education even if it is not the only question to solve, because Africa is also inserted into an international system whose relationship of forces are unfavorable to it.

But this dominant model begins to show its limits because with the demographic rise of Africa, the internal problems of Africa will spatter on the countries of the north

The problems identified to face these challenges authorize recommendations on the following questions:

- The generalization of compulsory education up to 16 years old;
- The adaptation of training to the needs of poor countries;
- The use of new technologies;
- The question of funding and international solidarity ;
- The prevention of religious radicalism;

1) The generalization of compulsory education up to 16 years old;

Obscurantism is now the biggest threat for the years to come, hence the issue to keep as long as possible the children at school. And to eradicate illiteracy it is essential to ensure compulsory schooling up to the age of 16years, which will ensure education for vulnerable groups such as the disabled and to give more opportunities to girls to escape early marriage.

2) Skills training adapted to the needs of African countries

It is important that the education system in Secondary can offer opportunities of orientation toward of skills in link with the local needs especially those of the non-formal sector, first sector of employment for the majority of the population in countries in The South of the Sahara,. The education system must enroll in logic of anticipation to face problems related to climate change, conflicts, disease and epidemics, with risks of loss of already insufficient human resources. (HIV / Ebola)

3) Use of new technologies

The strategies that so far have allowed most countries to provide an education to their populations may not be valid any longer due to the enormous challenges Africa have to face, particularly the demographic challenge which is unprecedented in the history of humanity. That is why it will be essential to explore new avenues that may open thanks to ICT.

4) The financing of education and equity in international trade

For lack of sufficient income, the states can not guarantee access for all to public services and the poor populations cannot have access to private services. But without qualification, without access to employment, young people of poor countries will massively migrate to the richest countries, with the risks of conflicts and instability. The answer to this question is political and questions the imbalance in international exchanges

5) Prospective capacity and strategies to deal with religious radicalism

To achieve universal education it is necessary that girls have the same opportunities as boys, and today in sub-Saharan Africa, the rise of religious radicalism is a real threat to an inclusive education. This radicalism is also a source of violence and instability because it has developed mechanisms of absorptions of the young people excluded from the school circuit. It is important to ensure that this rising force that is youth is not reclaimed by political forces in the service of a devastating ideology and for this the educational system constitutes the first rampart.