

Whose Education for All?

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1. Introduction

Year 2000 marks the tenth anniversary of the Education for All declaration. Ten years have passed since the main donors, country representatives and NGO's met in Jomtien, Thailand, to discuss the education problems of the world generally, and the developing countries specifically (Brock-Utne, 2000). We are here concerned with the effects of the policies laid down at the Jomtien meeting for the education sector in Africa. What seems to be the problems? What are the concerns of the donors? How much are the African countries deciding on their own educational policies? The following discussion is based on experiences gained through following some basic education projects in Africa supported through Norwegian funding channelled through UNICEF. From 1996 through 1998, Norway has given 200 Million NOK (30 Million US\$), 50 million bilaterally through NORAD, 150 Million multilaterally through UNICEF via its Foreign Ministry to support basic education in Africa, targeting the girl child. Through my connection for two years (1996-1998) as a consultant to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, I have had the opportunity of following and partly assessing some of the projects under the Education for All umbrella.

The Norwegian Foreign Ministry/ UNICEF support has concentrated on 18 different countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, ten in the so-called francophone Africa and eight in the so-called anglophone Africa. I have been on field trips to Guinea, (Brock-Utne, 1996), to Swaziland (Brock-Utne and Lexow, 1997) to Uganda (Brock-Utne, 1997a), Botswana (Brock-Utne, 1997b) and to Niger (Brock-Utne, 1998). All of my field-trips have been short but have at least given me some idea of the problems involved in implementing education for all and of where it would be interesting to make further studies.

The Foreign Ministry made a deal with my Institute freeing me from some teaching and examination work and also gave some money to my Institute for "professional assistance" without defining this item. We decided that the best way to use this small budget item was to have some interested "hovedfag"¹ students who were already following Education in Africa seminar series (see Brock-Utne and Miittinen, 1998) study some of the projects I had identified on my field trips. The students got the opportunity to spend a seven or eight week period in one of the eighteen countries receiving Norwegian support and to write their thesis dealing with the project they had studied. After some initial problems with the Head Office in New York and the Regional Office in Nairobi, the work of the students has been highly appreciated.

¹ "Hovedfag" is a Norwegian degree somewhere between a Master degree and a Ph.D. It is a degree obtained after six to seven years of study.

Plans had been made by the regional office in Nairobi to pair the Norwegian students up with master or doctoral students from the host countries when the Norwegian Foreign Ministry decided they would terminate the contract with the university. Five of my students have written their "hovedfag" theses connected to the Norwegian supported UNICEF projects in Africa. Two more are in the process of writing their theses connected to these projects (one of whom has made her field-studies in Namibia, the other one in Senegal). What do they tell us? What have the problems been? Can we draw some conclusions from these snapshots of work to follow up the donor commitment to "Education for All?"

Analysing the impressions from my own field-trips as well as the students' reports, I can see two great areas of concern. The one deals with the content of schooling, the relevance for the situation children are in. The other one deals with the language in which the content is transmitted. These two concerns do not seem to bother the donors to education in Africa much. One concern which does bother them is the importance of educating the girls. This concern will also be dealt with here. Towards the end of the paper we shall look at the development of the donor organisation DAE (Donors to African Education) into the organisation ADEA (Association for the Development of Education in Africa). "To what extent can this donor commitment mean a new deal for education in Africa? And to what extent are we here dealing with a real partnership, a partnership where the African countries assume a leadership role when it comes to policy-making in their own countries?" Chiepe (1999) comments: *It is time we as Africans take the leadership role in running our affairs in education* (p 7).

2. Whose education for all - the content of schooling in Africa.

The quote above stems from a speech held by Chiepe, Minister of Education in Botswana, opening a regional ADEA seminar on the Prospective Stock-Taking Review of Education in Africa. The official donor policy is also that support should be given to the country's own priorities within the education sector. But when these priorities go contrary to donor policy, they may be difficult to fund. Sometimes also one donor has started an intervention in a country, hired people, built up infrastructure, sometimes a whole institution and suddenly withdraws. To secure continued funding for this intervention, which frequently was a donor intervention, then becomes a priority for the government in question.

Such was the case in Swaziland, which does not belong to the least developed countries in Africa, but for some years had received support from USAID (United States Agency for International Development), for their primary education sector. In 1985, a national Education Review Commission (NERCOM) gave a report, where the main issue was that it was time to start working on quality in education. In 1988 USAID entered the stage by offering support to the education sector on the basis of the NERCOM report. Negotiations were held between USAID officials and the Ministry of Education in Swaziland, and by 1990 the Educational Policy Management and Technology (EPMT) project had been agreed upon and was ready for implementation. The project provided support in five different areas. These were Continuous Assessment (CA), Head Teacher Management Training,

Management Information Systems, Guidance and Counselling and Organisational Development. USAID was providing mainly three types of support:

- technical assistance, i.e. personnel from the United States, both resident technical adviser and short-term consultants;
- training of manpower, advanced training at universities in the United States (Master's degrees and internships) for some staff members in Ministry of Education and the NCC (National Curriculum Centre) and training programmes for all teachers in Swaziland on CA;
- equipment of different kinds.

The technical assistance into this programme was all the time provided by the Institute for International Research (IIR) in Virginia, USA. IIR is a private consulting organisation with 25 years experience in primary education in developing countries. Over the years, IIR has won many USAID (as well as World Bank, Ford Foundation, etc.) contracts.

As soon as the EPMT-project was initiated, the CA unit was established at the National Curriculum Centre (NCC). The staff of the unit were experienced curriculum designers and school teachers. The staff was initially composed of persons with competence in English and maths, the two subjects where CA was first implemented. The unit employed six full time professionals and a secretary. Besides the full-time employed staff, a group of retired teachers were attached to the unit.

USAID provided support to the EPMT project for six years and ended their support in July 1996. A final evaluation of the project had been carried through by the consultancy firm Creative Associates International Incp. (CAII as contractors for USAID).

The evaluation report emphasised that there had been "a bias in favour of high-tech, top-down approaches to educational change" (Clark and Pearson, 1996, p 5, here taken from Tungesvik, 1999:137). For the three first years of the project attempts were made to change teacher behaviour, without any needs assessment with the teachers themselves having been conducted. Communication and information were not improved for instance between the INSET and the CA unit, even if organisational development was part of the project. In spite of these shortcomings and many more, the evaluation report concludes that "EPMT overall has been a very successful project" (p 6).

The withdrawal of USAID from the scene created problems for people hired on the project and for the maintenance of the infrastructure. The Ministry shopped around for new donor support and found the UNICEF project with Norwegian funding. There was conditionality tied to this support, however; one had to target the girl child especially. The Ministry swallowed this conditionality and got UNICEF/Norwegian support.

The CA component of the EPMT-project was the one that most directly affected the work of the teachers. The decision about introducing CA in the

schools was, however, made without prior consultation with the most important stakeholders like the Swaziland National Teacher's Association (SNAT). Due to this fact, many teachers felt that the programme was imposed on them. This had an impact on their own involvement in the programme (Tungesvik, 1999).

In September 1997 SNAT organised a march to Ministry of Education, protesting against CO. More than 2 000 teachers participated in the march according to the Swazi Observer (26 September 1997). SNAT called on the Ministry to review the CA programme and also normalise the teacher/student ratio which at times could be as high as 1:60. Interestingly, a World Bank Review from 1995 entitled "Priorities and Strategies for Education" (World Bank, 1995) names some social actors in developing countries that are considered obstacles to positive change. Teachers' unions are among the main actors mentioned.

The advice from the World Bank is that these actors should be weakened if reform processes are to be efficient. Ragnhild Tungesvik comments: *This is quite remarkable from an institution that wants to "teach" Africa democracy and good governance. It seems like the implementation of CA has been quite in line with World Bank policies in this case* (Tungesvik, 1999: 148).

Neither had the Teacher colleges been involved in the initial work with CA. A CA unit had been created and foreign experts brought in. The fact that the institution with the highest degree of professional competence within the country was not consulted properly, means that local capacity was not taken into consideration. Other professionals were sent to the US to get their university degrees and experts from the US brought in.

In connection with the CO project new textbooks were produced by the National Curriculum Centre. Care was taken that African names and drawings of African children were used. But the family followed through the fifth grade pupils' English book, the Dlamini family, in spite of their African name seems to be modelled on the Western stereotype of a nuclear family from the 1950s in which the father is a breadwinner and the mother is the housewife, rather than depicting the real diversity of Swazi families (Okkelmo, 1999).

3. Education for all - how useful are the non-formal programs?

The Jomtien emphasis on basic education² has led to a proliferation of so-called non-formal schooling in order to quickly increase the number of children in school. These schools are set up to give children who have dropped out of school or never started and are older than the normal school starters a chance to catch up with the regular school-goers. This being the aim, the irrelevance for an African child of the content of the normal primary school built on a western concept of schooling is frequently repeated in the non-formal schools. Experiences I have made in Guinea (Brock-Utne, 1996) and Uganda (Brock-Utne, 1997b) have convinced me that at least the non-formal

² For a discussion of the concept basic education in relation to education for all and primary education, see Brock-Utne, 2000.

schooling should aim at giving children qualifications which will enable them to find or create a job for themselves.

Guinea is currently running a non-formal education programme aimed at girls. The name of the programme is PASE (Programme d'Adjustement du Secteur de l'Education). The programme is government initiated, supported by UNICEF and with Norway as one of the donors. A part of the PASE programme is the establishing of the so-called NAFA³ centres for non-formal education. The local community in the various districts has been strongly involved, through self-help projects, in building the NAFA centres for non-formal education. On my visit to some of these centres in December 1996 I experienced how proud the local communities were of these centres. The parents felt that their children now got real education since they learnt to read and write in French. The learners seemed to be more interested in the vocational skills they acquired. The NAFA centres recruit children between 10 and 16 years of age who have never been to school or have dropped out at an early stage. The programme lasts for three years and follow another curriculum and time-schedule than the formal schools. While the formal school starts at 8 a.m., the NAFA centres open at 9 a.m., so that the girls are able to do some domestic chores before school. The centres close at 1 p.m. and stay open for only four days a week. The curriculum includes vocational subjects that aim at giving the learners a practical training. The vocational subjects include sewing, making of batik and "tie and dye", carpentry and the making of soap and of bricks for the building of houses.

On my visit to Guinea one of the teachers had written a story in French on the blackboard and asked one of the girls to read out the first sentences, wanting obviously to impress the Norwegian visitor. The girl "read" quickly and fluently with a good pronunciation and in a loud voice but I discovered that she did not really read. She had learnt the text by heart. When I in the break pointed at one of the words in one of the sentences she had read, she could not figure that word out before she had started all over again on the text and counted the words she "read" out. She was supposed to be one of the most clever students in the class.

I asked her why she went to the NAFA centre. She answered that she was there to learn "savonification"³ - soap-making. Once a week those who had chosen "savonification" were working together with professional soap-makers and she hoped that she would do so well where she now was that she would be able to get a job in that small soap-making enterprise or maybe build up her own. The non-formal school-system built up in Uganda, the so-called COPE centres has not included vocational training as part of the curriculum (Brock-Utne, 1997; Grov, 1999; Nyquist, 1999). Grov notes: *UNICEF in Uganda is not in favour of supporting vocational education in COPE. The reason for this, I was told, is the high cost of vocational education... The Ministry of Education (MoE) seems to be somewhat restricted by the UNICEF policy, as they rely on economic support for the COPE programme. Still,*

³Participating in a French course in Cannes in the summer of 1998, I learnt that the word "savonification" is not used in the French spoken in France though it is used in the French spoken in West-Africa.

several of the MoE representatives I discussed COPE with told me that they personally would prefer to add some degree of vocational skills to the COPE curriculum (Groves, 1999: 65).

Groves cites from a paper presented at the AGEI workshop in Mbarara in 1998: *The community insistence on the need for vocational training for older COPE children deserves serious consideration* (Mumbe, 1998 in Groves, 1999:66). In the Instructor's Guide to COPE, prepared by the US-based firm Creative Associates⁴ for MoE/UNICEF the following is written about vocational skills in COPE: Vocational skills are specialised skills used in different occupations like carpentry or accounting. Although some attempts had been made to include these skills, at present we cannot deal with them fully. In order to meet the need, you should try to persuade local professionals and craftsmen to help the pupils to learn the skills (Elphick, 1995:6 in Groves, 1999:66).

According to this citation it seems to be the responsibility of the individual instructor with little training, a heavy work-load and low pay to decide on and implement vocational training in COPE. One cannot expect these instructors to engage in time-consuming vocational activities without any financial and moral support. Neither can one expect them to be successful in persuading local craftsmen to do the training when there are no funds set aside for such an activity. Hoppers, who has done extensive research on vocational education in Africa, notes: *Work orientation, of whatever approach, can only succeed to the extent that the teachers are motivated, prepared and also supported in their efforts to give meaning to basic education" (Hoppers, 1996). Groves, after her six weeks of field studies of the COPE programme in Uganda concludes that vocational training would have added relevance and quality to the COPE programme, but that "the individual instructor must receive support and encouragement from both district and national level for such an improvement to fully succeed (Groves, 1999:66).*

When I visited the COPE programme in Bushenyi at the end of August 1997, I noted a great difference in drop-out rate between two COPE schools in the area. I attribute this difference in drop-out rate mostly to the fact that in one of the schools the instructor had promised the children who attended the school regularly that they would, at the end of the year, learn some vocational skills from him in his home. These skills included brick-making, building of a house, baking of bread and gardening, especially growing of herbs. No vocational skills or promises of the learning of such skills were part of the curriculum of the COPE school with a high drop out rate.

Groves in her field-work also found an instructor who had arranged a small garden in order to teach the COPE pupils how to grow different vegetables. This instructor was very motivated and had a lot of plans for vocational

⁴ In the process of developing the curriculum and other materials for COPE the MoE in Uganda "invited competent institutions to design the 3-year syllabus and develop a plan for completing relevant teaching and learning materials" (GoU/ UNICEF 1997:6 in Nyquist,1999:27). In this competitive bidding Uganda's own National Curriculum and Development Centre (NCDEC) was originally one of the bidders, but CAII won the competition and was set to assist MoE and UNICEF for a three-year period with the development of the COPE materials.

activities she wanted to include in her work as a COPE instructor. A policy which leaves so much up to the initiative of the individual instructor and is not backed up by financial support is, however, not sustainable.

4. Education for All - in whose language?

Whatever aspect of the educational system in an African country (in Uganda, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Senegal) my Norwegian students have gone to study over the past years they have all come back full of stories of the difficulties both children and teachers had in mastering the school subjects because of the language of instruction that they did not master well. Grov and Nyquist who went to Uganda were also struck by the fact that the language policy of Uganda, which they had studied before they left for the country, was not practised in the schools in which they made their observations. In the Government White Paper the following language policy is laid down:

- In rural areas the medium of instruction from P.1 to P.4 will be the relevant local languages; and from P.5 to P.8 English will be the medium of instruction.
- In the urban areas the medium of instruction will be English through the primary cycle.
- Kiswahili and English will be taught as compulsory subjects to all children throughout the primary cycle, both in rural and urban areas. Emphasis in terms of allocations of time and in the provision of instructional materials, facilities and teachers will, however, be gradually placed on Kiswahili as the language possessing greater capacity for uniting Ugandans and for assisting rapid social development.
- The relevant area language will also be taught as a subject in primary school; this applies to both rural and urban areas (GWP, 1992:19).

Most of the COPE schools are in the rural areas. The district Bushenyi that I visited and where Grov and Nyquist did their field-work is a rural district where one would have expected the language of instruction to be the local language. One would especially have expected this because the COPE instructors have few years of schooling, little teacher training, inadequate command of English, and the pupils are often drop-outs from the regular school or come from very poor homes with no exposure to English. Yet the Instructor's Guide to COPE instructors (written by the US-based firm "Creative Associates") states: *The COPE curriculum follows the official government language policy. In the first year, use the local language for all subjects except English. In English lessons, use English only. In the second and third years, use English for all subjects except mother tongue. Obviously there must be some overlap, but you **must be using English only** by term two year two* (Elphick, 1995:17, emphasis in original).

As we see the Instructor's Guide does **not** follow the official government language policy since that policy advocates use of the local language as medium of instruction up to P.4 in rural areas which are the areas where the COPE schools are mostly located. The same Instructor's Guide further argues

that "since there is extremely limited exposure to English in the environment of the average COPE child, it is absolutely essential that, when the time comes for using English as the medium of instruction, English should be used for all subjects." One recognises that pupils often can have problems understanding various subjects when the medium of instruction is English. One recommendation for solving this problem is by *teaching in English and forcing pupils into a situation where they cannot survive without learning it ...after learning has been introduced in the local language, the teacher **must** teach in English, and preferably use English for all activities within the learning centre* (ibid. p 17, emphasis is original).

Grov and Nyquist found that in all the primary schools and COPE classes they visited in Bushenyi all instruction was in English from P.1 and onwards in spite of the government policy. Grov remarks: *This is strange, since all the teachers I talked to wished to use mother tongue as the medium of instruction* (Grov, 1999:87). The curriculum for COPE is written in English, from year one and onwards. Even the Instructor's Guides for the subject "mother tongue" are all written in English.

Grov and Nyquist give detailed descriptions from the COPE classrooms built on their own observations through many lessons. Their descriptions show the limited command the instructors have of English and the difficulties the pupils have in answering questions within any subject as long as the medium of instruction is English. Grov writes:

In a Mathematics session I observed in one COPE centre, the difference in participation was very clear, depending on what language the instructor spoke. The topic for this lesson was, "solving word problem involving division". The instructor read the title out loud and asked the learners to explain what it meant. There were no volunteers. When the question was repeated in mother tongue, several hands were raised. The pupils gave correct answers and willingly answered any additional questions from the instructor. When the questions again were asked in English, the amount of hands dropped to only a couple. The lack of participation was particularly striking when it came to the girls. The girls were more reluctant answering questions when they were uncertain of the answer. The difficulties were intensified by language problems, and made the girls even more passive. The instructor noted that the girls did not participate and frequently encouraged them to answer. They did not respond before he started explaining and asking questions in mother tongue (Grov, 1999:90).

When Grov afterwards talked with the instructor, he said that he found the whole teaching situation very frustrating because there was no doubt that children learnt much better through their mother tongue. He also preferred to teach in mother tongue since he felt that his English skills were not too good. But because of the COPE policy outlined in the Instructor's Guide he felt that he should teach as much as possible in English. After this math lesson had finished another instructor came to teach "mother tongue" which was taught as a subject. Grov cites from her observation notes: *The change in the classroom was unbelievable. The topic was: "Traditions in Africa," and the instructor was telling stories and frequently asking questions. The classroom seemed like an explosion of hands. The learners competed in answering and provided lengthy answers when given the chance* (Grov, 1999:91).

Nyquist (1999) had the same experiences. She writes: *During my observations I noticed a significant change in the children's behaviour and attitude when the instructors changed from English to mother tongue. When English was the language of instruction, the children were silent, shy and did not participate if they were not spoken to. At first, I thought it was because Grov and I were present, but when the instructor changed to mother tongue as medium of instruction, the children's behaviour changed dramatically. The children who had not said a word previously were now eager to answer and their hands were constantly in the air, showing how much they wanted to answer the instructor's questions* (Nyquist, 1999:102). This observation is the same I did through my hundreds of lessons doing teacher-student supervision in secondary schools in Tanzania⁵. I observed one passive class after the other when the medium of instruction was English and the same class as an active class when the medium of instruction was Kiswahili as it was at that time both in the subject "siasa"⁶ and in Kiswahili as a subject (Brock-Utne, 2000).

After having observed many lessons in classrooms in Uganda, Hege Grov (ibid.) concludes: *It is my general impression that when the pupils answered in English, the answers were memorised.* She reached this conclusion by observing the lack of understanding the student often showed when asked further on a subject or with other words than those memorised. As already mentioned I came across the same phenomenon of memorising the text on my fieldtrip to Guinea.

In Swaziland which has a uniting language, siSwati, that almost the whole population speaks, the official policy is still that only the first four grades are supposed to be taught in siSwati while English is the medium of instruction from Grade V onwards. Having heard that many schools, especially in Mbabane, use English as medium of instruction from grade 1, I asked the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education about this practice (Brock-Utne and Lexow, 1997). The PS said that the government did nothing to prevent this practice, as they felt that it should be up to the parents and the

⁵ See Brock-Utne (1993; 2000) for further discussion of the question of the medium of instruction in Tanzania. In Tanzania the medium of instruction in primary school is Kiswahili and plans existed for having Kiswahili as the language of instruction also in secondary and tertiary education. The first President of an independent Tanzania, the late Julius Nyerere, was himself a great promoter of Kiswahili using the language in Parliament, translating himself Shakespeare to Kiswahili, promoting the language as the medium of instruction in primary school and adult education. But it seems like he in 1987 was afraid of promoting the language as medium of instruction in secondary school. In later years he changed his position here and in 1995 strongly advocated the idea of using Kiswahili as medium of instruction in secondary schools and other institutions of higher learning (Nyerere 1995 in Rubanza, 1997).

⁶ The subject "siasa" which means "politics" or here rather "political education" was a subject closely connected to the ideology of Nyerere's party, the party CCM (Chama cha Mapinduzi -the Revolutionary party), the only legal party for some years. When Tanzania reintroduced a multi-party system in 1994, one may understand the need for changing the content of the subject "siasa". It is now called "social studies". Not only the content has been changed but also the language of instruction. The number of lessons taught in the familiar language Kiswahili in secondary school has been reduced.

learners to decide on the medium of instruction. This is a difficult position to take when so many learners and their parents equate education with learning English and hold the erroneous belief that having the foreign language as a language of instruction aids the learning of that language. When pupils do not understand what is going on in class, they have to resort to strategies that are counter-productive to real learning. Mikael Palme has made observations in classrooms in Mozambique and reports: *Pupils learn things other than what they are supposed to learn. They learn to listen to the intonation the teacher uses in questions so that they can know if the expected answer is "yes" or no"(...). They learn to pronounce words they do not understand the meaning of. They scrupulously copy sentences devoid of meaning to them* (Palme, 1993:38). Ragnhild Tungesvik (1999:29) quotes Palme and comments: *This corresponds with our observations in primary schools in Swaziland.*

On a fieldtrip to Motokwe in the Kalahari⁷ desert in Botswana, I experienced the tough life schooling led to for the Basarwa children (Brock-Utne, 1997b). Language problems contributed to the problems they had. They had been separated from their parents and the nomadic life they were used to lead, stowed together in over-crowded hostels with inadequate diet. In school, the teachers were using Setswana and English as the official languages. In Botswana, the medium of instruction is Setswana from standard one to four. After that, English takes over⁸. When the other children, who mostly were from Motokwe village, did not understand, the teacher would explain in Sekgalagadi, a language close to the one spoken in Motokwe village. But the Basarwa children did neither understand Sekgalagadi (a language close to Setswana), Setswana nor English. Their language is very different from both Sekgalagadi and Setswana. Tone Holtan (1999), who did her field-work in Botswana, was after initially having spent some time in Gabarone and before she had come to Motokwe, quite impressed by the "Break-through" methodology being used in schools in Botswana. The Breakthrough is supposed to be a mother tongue literacy course in African languages for the first year in school. The Breakthrough methodology is supposed to build on what the children already know. Holtan ended up by doing her fieldwork in a school in Motokwe attended also by Basarwa children, living in hostels on the school compound. Here she had a different experience of the Breakthrough methodology: *This project is unsuccessful for the Basarwa children. The methodology clarifies that it is building on knowledge the children already hold. This is not the case. The methodology does not take into account the language of the Basarwa children. It builds on Setswana as the first language and not the mother tongue of the Basarwa children. This means that the Breakthrough methodology is intended for the majority of the children, and not*

⁷ The Kalahari is inhabited by the Bantu-speaking Batswana and by the Khoisan-speaking San to which the Basarwa belong. The Khoisan language group was considered to be the indigenous language within the southern part of Africa 150 years ago. There used to be about 150 different Khoisan languages, but today there are only one third of them left. In Namibia I found that the speakers of these languages are disappearing (Brock-Utne, 1995; 1997c), but this does not seem to be the case in Botswana. There are several San language groups, with the Khoi language being the largest one.

⁸ There are also private schools, mostly in Gabarone, that use English as the medium of instruction from standard one.

for the Basarwa children (Holtan, 1999: 78). Rubagumya (1997) refers to research in several African countries that shows that maintaining and encouraging the connection between the language of the home and the language of the school has positive effects on the learning process. For example, talking about the situation in Burundi, Ndayipfukamiye (1994:83-84) asserts that: *Apart from being a resource for supporting concept development, the use of Kirundi (in education) is also a key to the world and culture of the participants involved in the learning/ teaching events. It is a means of alleviating the artificiality and remoteness of the classroom events from learners' experience. It enables interactants to make relevant connections with their lives beyond the school.* Cleghorn et al. (1989:21) make the same observation in connection with Kenyan primary schools when they say that: *restrictions on the use of languages other than English during interaction may ultimately hamper student understanding of important concepts.* This advice is, as one might note, the opposite of the one given in the Instructor's Guide for the COPE schools in Uganda worked out by Creative Associates.

Niger has eight national languages, including Arabic, apart from the official language which is French inherited through the French colonisation of Niger. The language question was discussed in all of my meetings with education authorities in Niger during my fieldtrip to that country in April 1998 (Brock-Utne, 1998).

The Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, Hima Adiza, said that I had come at an exciting time for Niger because the Government had recently decided to promote all the eight national languages as languages of instruction during the first years. The government is going to start with a new policy, she declared. The first reports had come out from a few of the experimental schools where the national languages had been introduced, and the results seemed promising. Of course, the implementation of the new language policy of Niger would be costly and she praised donors like the German GTZ and the Swiss who helped Niger in their work with the promotion of the national languages. GTZ had promised help over a nine-year period. There was a great need for publications in the various languages, for teacher guides, and for translations.

In a later meeting Mai Manga Therese Keita, the national co-ordinator of the education of girls, said that the language question was the most important concerning schooling of girls and she got upset when some people did not see this. Keeping French as the language of instruction was okay for the children of the intellectuals, who heard a lot of French anyway, but she was thinking of the poor people, of the rural population, of those who did not use French outside of the formal school setting. She said she was happy for the help they received from GTZ in putting their new language policy in place

On my visit to Niger, I also met with the regional education authorities who showed me some of the textbooks which had recently been developed under a World Bank loan. The textbooks, developed by INDRAP, (Institut National de la Recherche et Animation Pedagogic), were written by researchers and teachers from Niger and published in Niger. They were only published in

French, however, in spite of the official policy of supporting the eight national African languages as languages of instruction in the first grades. But the content of a social sciences book that I studied more thoroughly seemed to be very relevant to the situation in Niger, almost all the examples were taken from their own country. The education authorities were quite proud of the books and told me that the earlier books, which had been written in France, were highly irrelevant. This was a big step forward. However, I did not see any of the children working with or carrying any of the books.

From my impressions from fieldtrips to Africa the last years, it seems like a couple of "francophone" countries⁹ are especially committed to re-introducing African languages as languages of instruction. But a lot of support, both morally and financially, might be needed because the forces working for the strengthening of the colonial languages are strong. These forces are linked to policies favouring a free market economy and a reduced state.

5. Targeting the girl child

Donors to education in Africa have been particularly concerned that the drive towards education for all should target the girl child especially. I have elsewhere analysed this concern (Brock-Utne, 2000) and shown that the argument that basic education should target the girl child is mostly based on an economic analysis.

Even some years of schooling of a girl child are said to be beneficial to curbing population growth.¹⁰ Surveys of all the available studies on population growth show, however, that the relationship of fertility to girls' education is complex. It is mediated by the social, cultural, and political contexts of girls' and women's lives within patriarchal gender relations. Christine Heward (1997) draws on an analysis of the findings of studies of fertility and education in thirty-eight different countries derived from the World Fertility Survey and the Demographic and Health Survey of the United Nations Population Fund and the International Union for the Study of Population. This analysis shows that there are thresholds of development below which education has little effect on fertility. Education appears to reduce fertility in countries with higher levels of development and more egalitarian gender regimes. Autonomy is

⁹ I have here mentioned Niger and elsewhere (Brock-Utne, 1996; 2000) Guinea. In December 1996 I had a discussion about the language policy with the Minister for Education and Research of Guinea Mr. Kozo Zoumanigui. He told me how Guinea, which had been a pacesetter on the francophone west African scene, using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction both at elementary and secondary levels of education, relapsed into French at the secondary level with the end of Sekou Toure's revolution in 1984. The minister informed me that the government of Guinea had recently decided to strengthen the national African languages as languages of instruction for primary as well as adult education. He told me about the period between 1968 and 1984 when education through the medium of African languages was the official policy of Guinea. This was suddenly changed in 1984 without any evaluation or research having taken place in connection with the language policy. This time the government of Guinea had decided to follow up on the reintroduction of the use of African languages as languages of instruction through an on-going evaluation process (Brock-Utne, 1996; 2000).

¹⁰ This argument, when coming from Western donors, to me always seems racist. Who are we, who are using so much of the world resources, to say that those who use much less should not have more children? In most of the countries in SSA I have visited, there is space enough for many more people. The most heavily populated area in the world is Central Europe. We also know now that it is not large population growth that leads to poverty, but the other way around: poverty leads to big families.

crucial to women's control over their fertility. The relation between education and autonomy is mediated by the cultural relations of patriarchy. In many highly patriarchal settings woman's autonomy increases only if she has a secondary or higher education.

There are good reasons why girls should be educated, and it may be necessary to target them especially, but the arguments for doing so should have to do with fairness, equity, and securing the best talents in important jobs rather than with having women give birth to fewer babies.

Of my students connected to the UNICEF/Norwegian Foreign Ministry initiative called AGEI¹¹ Kjersti Franciszka Okkelmo (1999) was the one who looked most specifically at the situation of the girls in the programme. The aim of the AGEI programme in Swaziland where Okkelmo did her research is "to support girls' education by improving the quality of the teaching/learning process" (Okkelmo, 1999:9).

Collecting statistics from the Ministry of Education and the UNICEF office in Swaziland Okkelmo found gross enrolment rate and net enrolment rate for primary school fairly equal when it comes to gender. The repetition rate was somewhat higher for boys (18% against girls 13%). A fairly equal entry rate is also found in secondary school. Because of this rather equal enrolment and access to education in Swaziland many educationists and policy makers Okkelmo met in Swaziland held the view that there was no need to give the gender issue a priority within education.

Through class-room observations and text-book analysis Okkelmo found, however, that there were certainly reasons also in Swaziland to look into the gender issue in education. First of all little had been done before AGEI entered the CA programme to collect statistics disaggregated by gender. It was difficult to find out how many head teachers were women, how many men, how many of the drop-outs were girls, how many boys, what grades girls got and what grades boys got. Okkelmo found that the teaching style used was mostly teacher-centred and rather authoritarian. Looking at the quantitative aspects of the teacher-pupils interactions, they seemed to favour the girls who, according to Okkelmo's data, got more of the teachers' attention than the boys did. This finding contrasts with the findings of similar gender studies in other countries. Okkelmo found that girls participated more actively and took the initiative in teacher-pupil interactions more often than boys did. This was especially true when the pupils were supposed to answer questions asked by the teacher. A different picture seemed, however, to emerge in situations characterised by a more child-centred teaching style. In such situations, boys tended to participate more actively than girls.

¹¹AGEI stands for African Girls' Education Initiative. The programme is being administered from the UNICEF Headquarters in New York, the regional offices in Nairobi (where Kjersti Franciszka Okkelmo now works) and in Abidjan (where one of the first students in my Education in Africa" seminar, Øyvind Ørbeck-Sørheim worked for three years) and is supported through the Norwegian Foreign Ministry in 18 different African countries. The policy is to work closely with the ministries of education in the countries involved.

Okkelmo discusses the authoritarian and teacher-centred teaching style and notes: *Acceptable adaptable-qualifications like obedience seem to be consistent with this teaching style, as well as with the qualifications of subordination taught to the female gender by the society as a whole. This may explain why girls interact more often when teacher-centred teaching is used. It also means that girls' frequent participation within this style consequently reinforce and maintain the subordinated role of females in society. Ironically, frequent participation is therefore not advantageous to girls* (Okkelmo, 1999:193).

Okkelmo found that gender stereotyping in the Swazi primary schools, where she made her observations, mostly happened through the hidden curriculum, e.g. the example of a gender hierarchy pupils experience when the head-teachers and school-inspectors are men and teachers, especially in lower grades. The hidden curriculum was also experienced through who got what chores to do for the teacher. Okkelmo found that the girls did twice as many of the domestic duties in the classroom, such as sweeping the floor, cleaning the blackboard, and handing out and collecting books, than boys did. She also found clear gender stereotypes in the textbooks. We have already mentioned the Dlamini family followed through the fifth grade pupils' English book who seems to be modelled on the Western stereotype of a nuclear family from the 1950s, in which the father is a breadwinner and the mother is the housewife. In the Dlamini family the mother "got it right" because she gave birth to the boys before the girls. Also Agnes is told to iron her brother Modison's trousers although she will be late for school. There is no question that she has to iron his trousers, only when she will do it. In the same text-book Okkelmo also found that girls and women were depicted doing domestic work, along with a few boys, but no men. Males were portrayed more frequently than females in duties and employment outside the home. More than half of the portrayals of women in jobs are of women as teachers. The males are portrayed to occupy many more varied jobs (Okkelmo, 1999).

6. From DAE to ADEA

A forum that could well take up the problems here highlighted through visits to some donor supported projects is the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). The development of originally an association of donors called Donors to African Education (DAE) into ADEA is interesting.

The origin of DAE and later ADEA dates back to the publication of the 1988 World Bank report: *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalisation and Expansion*¹². This report identified poor donor co-ordination¹³ as a problem that encouraged competition between agencies and placed high demands on the management and co-ordination capacities of recipient governments. In 1989, donors established a forum they named

¹² For a critical assessment of this publication, see Brock-Utne (2000).

¹³ I have elsewhere (Brock-Utne, 2000) discussed the coordination of aid to the education sector in Africa and argued that the coordination ought to be done by the countries involved and not the agencies. It ought to be the logical framework and accounting system developed by the country receiving the aid that should form the basis for reporting not the logical frameworks of the various donor agencies.

Donors to African education, a forum that held regular meetings, had a secretariat and produced a Newsletter. But in the words of Mmantsetsa Marope, the Head of ERNESA: *It soon became clear that effective co-ordination of agencies working for the development of education in Sub-Saharan Africa would be greatly enhanced by the active participation of the leaders of African education systems. Thus, DAE was transformed into an association of agencies and African ministers of education and became the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Over time, ADEA has striven to become a partnership between ministries and development agencies for the development of education in the region* (Marope, 1999:3).

"Partnership" is the new buzzword of the donor agencies. The partnership is, however, as unequal as could be. The composition of the ADEA meetings illustrates this well. While the African countries send their top people to the meetings, mostly the Ministers or Deputy Ministers of Education, the donors are represented by consultants or agency officials, sometimes quite low in the hierarchy. The Somalian educator and poet Hassan Keynan write in this way about the partnerships between agencies in the North and the governments in the South:

A beautiful tyranny misnamed partnership

*The relationship
To which we are wedded
Is a beautiful tyranny
Misnamed partnership.*

*Our partnership
Is a partnership of unequal partners
Of unequal powers and unequal
opportunities
A partnership honeycombed
With labyrinths of genteel deception, division and exclusion.
In our partnership
One party represents
An imperial order of unprecedented sway
and intrigue
Into whose hegemonic bosom
The other is conveniently entombed.*

*In our partnership
One party is the source, centre and
symbol
Of all knowledge, civilisation and salvation
The other a mere consumer of
high culture and quips¹⁴*

¹⁴ quips are quick impact projects.

*We are stakeholders in a bizarre covenant
That folds enslavement
In intoxicating benevolence and grace
Our partnership is afflicted with saintly inhumanity.*

In the cold mathematics of our
partnership
Our partnership is our destiny.
Amen.
Hassan Keynan, 1995

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