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EDUCATION: THE HEART BEAT OF AFRICA'S REGIONAL INTEGRATION LABOUR MOVEMENT?

Conrad John Masabo
Department of Educational Psychology and Curriculum Studies,
Faculty of Education
Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE)
mail: cmasabo@gmail.com or conrad.masabo@duce.ac.tz

Independence means self-reliance. Independence cannot be real if a nation [nations] depends upon gifts and loans from another for its [their] development. [...] indeed it is even more stupid, for us to imagine that we shall rid ourselves of our poverty through foreign financial assistance rather than our own financial resources. [As]... there is no country in the world which is prepared to give us gifts and loans, or establish industries [universities], to the extent that we would be able to achieve all our development targets - Mwl. Julius K. Nyerere, 1968: 22-23

ABSTRACT
After 50 years of independence as a continent, Africa is yet to graduate from dependency, ignorance and poverty. Lack of proper and meaningful education is one of the strait forward answers given because Africa continue to be characterised by poor education facilities and remain to be a continent that has no education of its own and thus lagging behind in education development. As the result, education has had little contribution to Regional Integration in Africa (RIA), though it is the warehouse for skills and knowledge transfer for better labour movement in Africa. The paper argues for mainstreaming, enriching it with local content and harmonisation of education as a key aspects in facilitating not only labour and people movement but also other three pillars of integration and as way to curtail the developmental challenges. It concludes by cautioning the danger of promoting the foreign culture, content and dependency in integrating Africans.

Keywords: Education; integration; Africa; PAU; development; labour movement

1. INTRODUCTION
At the dawn of 50 years of independence, as a continent, African countries has manifested the fact that, Nkrumah's prophecy to Africans "... has not come to pass. The political kingdom was secured with the gaining of political independence, but it remains fractured, fragile, dependent, and weak....economic development has remained elusive. [And] during an era of unprecedented global economic growth Africa seems to be left behind" (Mukandala *et al.*, 2006).

Getting rid of abject poverty is as if it has proved to be an impossible undertaking. Majority on the continent are not therefore assured of tomorrow, they are heading backward towards a hand to mouth type of economy similar to the people of the hunting and gathering days. As thus in many African countries it is common to hear that people go hungry in spite of the fertile lands and water sources while others invite foreign assistance in an undertaking that they would have undertaken it even without such assistance. Africa, therefore, have become a continent that cannot do away with the basic challenges of nature amidst all natural resources a phenomenon commonly referred to as '*the Africa's paradox of plenty*!'
However, history has revealed the reality, reminded and taught us that before foreign influence Africa was a self reliant continent. But why most of the continents heads of government are on

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constant official visits to seek for assistance? Was Africa predestined to beg? To this question Tarimo (2005:109) responds with 'big no', and he disputes that:

> *"The attitude of depending on people from other continents is rather a recent social behaviour.... emerged from excessive love of free things, alienation from the local context of life, and paternalism instituted by former colonial powers and wealthy countries intending to loot the mineral wealth of Africa. Because of the lack of self-innovation and self-confidence, the situation has ultimately resulted in the loss of survival mechanisms among the presented generation of Africans".*

From this proceeding argument a question can further be asked: if begging and dependency are only recent tendencies manifested in the post-colonial days; are there to stay? If no, how can we get rid of it? Or if the kinds of economies, politics, education, culture and beliefs that we have inherited have made us to repeat the refrain of the colonial master; we cannot do anything unless they come to assist; should we continue praising the master? If no; how cannot we shackle ourselves out of this cobweb of dependence and oppression? To do all of these we need to regain our self-confidence to help us to undertake the self-innovation measures to address our continent's developmental challenge.

To these some have responded that Africa have to unite to restore the imbalance. While unity is not a new answer; the 20th century has had a special attention to regional integration as a form of unity that will guide Africa in crossing this valley of vanities. Doing all these, self criticism is necessary both at individual and institutional levels. As Africans; are we prepared to pay for our own development? Can we say no to those who attempt to control our own affairs? Do we know our own priorities? Are we still in the dreams of joining the band wagon of western cultural imperialism? Can we promote our agenda; African agenda in the global politics? Questions litany is endless but we can attempt to provide vision to some. Central to most of the answers is that the yes answer will be determined by the level of Africa's regional integration shaped by our education quality and developmental agenda that will make Africa an equal partner in the geo-politics. These two are central to give us confidence to advance for African schema and affairs and will enable the realisation of the *Pax Africana*.

As thus, it is amusing to see that to date there are yet to be in place in Africa institutions that could prepare Africans to serve better their continent. It is from the fact that even the newly launched Pan African University still is entangled in the promotion of the Western education system as well as the promotion of some of the European cultural aspects that are embedded in the languages. The curriculum design, medium of instruction and funding of the university is highly Euro-influenced and there is little or no sense of the ownership by Africans; a reflection equal to public betrayal by the African leaders and the African academia.

Though integration was seen and accepted to be instrumental for the continent's development and well being; "Africa continues to engage at the periphery of the global economy as it is evident from the continent's declining share in global production and trade" (Hartzenberg 2011:3). Drawing from this footing; it is the interest of this paper to argue that; for effective Regional Integration in Africa (RIA) there is a need to embark and rethink for a kind of African education system across the whole continent enriched by tradition education systems, local content, and modern technology as well as cautioning African Union and Africans on the danger of promoting the foreign culture, content and over-dependency on foreign aid as the solution and way forward to attain what is for Africa. To begin with PAU, I shall argue shortly that if it can utilise its strategic position it can show the direction on how education acts as the heartbeat of RIA.

2. REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA (RIA)

The quest for integration in Africa and dates many centuries back and is manifested in conducting of different forms of trade such as the Trans-Saharan Trade, Regional trade

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conducted from Forest States through Central Africa East Africa. In all these forms of integration, an argument can be postulated that, it is when several units are joined the people can be better served by the trading activities in forms of accessing goods and markets. Like in the old days of Africa local and regional trade, in these days of globalisation, though with slight difference; it is argued that:

> *"Countries integrate because they do not want to lose out in the global competition for export markets and foreign direct investment (FDI) [and because countries have realised that]...their lives and economic options are being determined not only by themselves, but by an international environment over which they have little control, and that the inherent risks are being minimised through group and not individual country action" (Biswaro, 2012: xxii).*

Or as Mills and Sidiropoulos put it;

> *"... regional integration in Africa is largely a by-product of integration with the global economy. It is not a substitute for it, nor in its current guise is it a stepping stone towards it. [Because] Regional integration is unlikely in an environment where there are low levels of industrialisation, a heavy extra-regional dependency on imports and foreign trade, high transport costs and small economies and population numbers". (Mills and Sidiropoulos, 2000:5)*

Emanating from this fact there is an ever growing desire by African countries to rip from such benefits of modern economies and thus forcing them to prioritise integration as an important component of both their economy and foreign policies.

Although this fact has become the reality; the need to integrate has however sidelined education as one of the four pillars of integration: movement of goods and services; movement of capital; movement of people; and role and impact of regional institutions. It remains to be an implied undertaking and thus lacking vigorous focus by most of decision makers when deciding on basic issues for integration. The reality is that: focus is placed to other forms of integration forgetting that the need for social integration and free labour movement largely depends on quality of education as the warehouse for technocrats, goods and agents for integration. As it shall be shortly argued, for RIA to be fully realised there is a need for explicit mainstreaming education as a stepping stone for all other forms of RIA.

3. THE STATE OF AFRICA'S EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES

Africa continue to lag behind as one of the world's continent in preparation of its own human resources, less developed education system and poor education policy and educational infrastructure. It is thus constrained by both policy and structure as the result education is seen to have little or implied contribution to RIA. By depending on foreign institutes and education system for the training of its own manpower, the graduates have had no or little contribution to productive solution of Africa's problem. Largely they have found themselves acting as the agents for alien education system and Africa's 21st colonisation.

But should we continue with this challenge? Or how do we un-do what have implanted? To this in 2012, Mamdani responded with a simple but challenging solution, which if embraced the need policy shift and policy priorities change is obvious. It is a challenge to grow our own timber! He argued:

"we need to face up to the fact that the only sure way to a sustainable future is to develop the human resource for teaching and research at home. That is to grow our own timber" (Mamdani 2012: 6). It is a call to begin training our own specialists in and on the continent.

While such call is seen and easy to accept; challenges lag in the fact that how do we train such resources within the continent? Do we have such institutes of quality in terms of policy and structural framework? To the latter, the answer is no. but will individual African countries

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manage to cater for the needs of human resources of their own countries? To this again the answer is no. If "no" then which is the way forward? To respond to such question we firstly need to have a critical contemplation on what integration can offer. Since it is hard for each country to fully sustain itself; then by making education an agenda and priority in RIA, the continent will be in position to overcome the restrains.

Secondly; we need to be proactive mutually in policy formulation and implementations can serve as the foundation for our take off. We should work hard to un-do what the Bretton Institutions happed to our universities. For example, should serve as a learning moment that:

> *"... the consequences of the World Bank introduced reform; we have no choice but to open our eyes to its negative consequences - so as to address these. The reform was predicated first of all on producing numbers: student admissions were increased recklessly, without any thought to the need for a corresponding expansion of the material infrastructure or human capacities. As enrollment ballooned, classes exploded, tutorials ended, and the quality of teaching reached an all-time low". (Mamdani, 2012:6)*

To repair such damage, we have to loosen all these policies constrain before embarking on structural aspect of the problem. Here again Mamdani provides two fold suggestions:

> *"First, we need to radically decrease enrollment rather than to increase it; [and].... Second, graduate education has to be thought of as integral to the overall university process, and not as a standalone facility requiring endless doses of external injections. In practice, every Ph D student should be required to teach tutorials as part of his or her overall training. Post-doctoral fellows too should be required to combine teaching with research and writing". (Mamdani, 2012: 6).*

This is not an easy or simple method to follow but the required one to Africans if education is to positively contribute for RIA. We need to have education policy reform, financing and invest in infrastructure projects of our institutes and mainstreaming education as the heartbeat of RIA as the only solution to many challenges hampering the integration (UNESCO, 2005).

3.1 How do we mainstream education to serve the Africa's integration need?

The need for mainstreaming education to serve the integration agenda of the RIA cannot be underestimated. It is by doing so that education will help in making a meaningful integration and by making most, if not all African countries equal partner in the regional grouping and ultimately the actual realisation of RIA. Education as an industry with a multiple trickledown effect can contribute to more progressive and sustainable social integration, gender, movement of goods and services; movement of capital and movement of people. To rip from such advantages, we need to adopt a proactive move to promoting education as the heartbeat of integration in Africa. To that Africa need to mainstream education in its integration agenda because once mainstreamed; education can be dedicated to positive contribution to RIA in terms of manpower training, overcoming cultural and structural settings that perpetuate gender inequalities as well as prepare and guide African labour power for better service of the continent. For example the old challenge for efficient and viable RIA: inherited colonial and indigenous languages can be easily conquered if education is better planned and organised to serve such purpose.

To some this argument might sound irrelevant. But to most; they may agree that one of the major challenge to Africa's development agenda is the lack of manpower endowed with knowledge and skills that can better address the continent's challenges without making it a satellite of foreign policy experimentation. To these the comparative advantage of investing in

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education is evident and it contribution to the realisation of the four basic pillars of integration: namely; movement of goods and services, movement of capital, movement of people and making integration institutes of use to the continents development and the world at large. We should take it seriously since the lesser attention we give to education as the hub of RIA, the slighter countries and groups will slash from integration. But if that is the case how do we go about it?

Answering these questions partly calls for acknowledging the fact that Africa had for quite long been training its manpower elsewhere and that contributing in making the continent a dependant one in both training and knowledge creation. In that respect; any attempt to redress the situation should take purposive measures ranging from creating institutes of qualities dedicated for the education of Africans to better serve the continent and provide the kind of education that can serve the present needs of Africa. Here I am tempted to reckon Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's words made in 1961 during the inauguration of Dar es Salaam College. He said:

"*Our young men and women must have an African-oriented education. That is, an education which is not only given in Africa but also directed at meeting the present needs of Africa*" *(Nyerere, 1966: 130-131; Kimambo, 2008: 112).*

This should be our direction in making education to serve the interests of the continent. Second to this is to advance the kind of education that can refresh the minds of Africans who are currently entangled in the euro-mind sets. This can be done by providing the kind of education that is not alien to the needs of the continent a step that begins by raising region institutes to offer places to train our resources needed on and in the continent. This education should be enriched with local content that is relevant and supported by the use of technology that we think is necessary for addressing the continent's challenges. This may be by mainstreaming the compulsory study of courses such as African history, African languages, African politics and African gender studies that make a broad headway to enhancing gender equality without disintegrating family and individualism. To realise this, the call is made to our leaders to rethink on their political agenda and find out how they can take on board the education agenda and give it legal force. But is mainstreaming education enough? The answer is no! Then; what is next? Harmonisation of education in Africa!

3.2 Why harmonisation of education in Africa is necessary?

Once education mainstreamed and listed among the top priority of RIA; the next and necessary step is harmonisation. It is important since mainstreaming without harmonisation will not serve better the continent and will not ease the need for free labour movement as well as movement of goods and service; just mentioning but only a few. Africa has continued to promote foreign education enshrined in the colonial heritage. It has persistently promoted the embracing the education traditions of the former colonial masters and thus making it difficult for labour migration. For example in the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) countries two education systems exist: English and French education systems (Kandarai, 2010) while in East African Community (EAC); the same exists and here we have four education systems. These are as follows: in Burundi they follow 6-4-3-4; Kenya 8-4-4; Rwanda 6-3-3-4; and Tanzania and Uganda 7-4-2-3 (Tuning Africa, 2011). With such disparities; it is evident therefore that it hard to have a smooth and an easy labour migration even with single regional economic community (REC). This emanates right from the language barrier, curriculum deficit, and at time the question of accreditation of qualification gained. Africa and African Union should be on their guard to see to it that education is harmonised to enable African graduates to be able to move freely. If that is the case within RECs; what about to the rest of Africa? For the

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whole of Africa the problem is un-imaginable. It is bizarre! To undo this and realise the harmonisation mission to promote RIA there are several challenges that calls for immediate solution. These are but not limited to the following:

The first is the readiness to forego individual country's education system and open-up for a continent wide or at least a REC education system. This will simplify sharing of professionals; books and will as well open for both student', and teachers' free movement in terms of education opportunities (accessing education and employment). For example a requirement by a Kenyan student to spend one year before registering for a degree course in Uganda and Tanzania will be waived and loss of one year for a form. Tanzanian or Ugandan who is required to spend four years of first degree studies in most of Kenyan universities will be reclaimed.

Second is selecting the language of instruction. Africa has embraced several languages of instructions ranging from Kiswahili, Zulu; French, Arabic, Portuguese, English to Amharic to mentioned but only a few. With such multiplicity of languages of instruction it obvious therefore that easy integration and freedom to accessing education opportunities is hampered. Experiences have shown for example that even for the Pan African University (PAU) operation, AU has failed to have a clear policy on the language for instruction. This is evidenced Article 21[11] of the Statute of the Pan African University which enshrine the multiplicity of languages of instruction accepted to be used. In that regard and with such provision, the article has favoured each institute to adopt a language of instruction basing on the public mostly used language of instruction. While the PAU institutes in Kenya and Nigeria opted for English and that to be hosted in the Southern Africa region is likely to opt for English; that of Cameroon is struggling for the promotion and the adoption of both English and French (bilingualism) as the languages of instruction while the one in Algeria is likely to find itself negotiating between Arabic, French and English. From such continental programmes embracing multiplicity of languages; one can easily prophesy the impossibility and difficulties in promoting RIA. Trained in different tongues; how can one freely move in the continent? This is a challenge! AU and Africans have to choose a common language and preferably African language for instruction based on the continent needs and not that basing on individualistic influence of the colonial master.

Last but not least is the challenge of harmonising curriculum and raising institutes to take care and stand for quality once adhered to by member countries. It is the exposure to one and common curricula that will potentially position youth of this continent to equal and fair competition. It will as well simplify the easy transfer of credits accumulated in one institute to other since all will be following the same curricula. More still, at graduation; graduate will share basic skills in common and will only differ in options and some other institute based courses. To realise this, there is a challenge of having in place an institute of quality to oversee the curricula implementation and insuring quality across institutes and within institutes to make sure that all graduates have basic knowledge and skills in common. Here, the institutes such as Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) and Association of African Universities (AAU) can and should be empowered to facilitate the motion towards a harmonised African education system. However, before doing so; these institutes need to be empowered to make them attend to the task ahead in the education harmonisation processes in Africa.

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[11] The article provides for the working languages for Pan African University (PAU). It states: The working languages of the PAU shall be English, French and Arabic. The PAU Council shall determine the process and practical modalities for usage of other AU official languages, as well as other African languages. The article is from the PAU Statute was adopted by the Twentieth Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 28 January 2013b. It is however deferent to Article 1 (2) of the previous PAU Statutes adopted by Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in Addis Ababa on the 30th day of January 2012. The latter was more explicit stated: The official language of the PAU shall be French and English. The PAU Council shall determine the process and practical modalities for the use of other AU official languages by PAU.

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3.3 Can PAU reverse the story?

After 50 years of Africa independence, in November 2012; the continent marked one of the most important but critical and challenging move towards stronger and greater continental unity by launching of the Pan African University (PAU). This continental institution of higher education comprises of five Institutes namely: PAU Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (PAUSTI) in Kenya-Eastern Africa, PAU Institute for Life and Earth Sciences (PAULES) in Nigeria-Western Africa, PAU Institute for Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences (PAUGHSS) in Cameroon-Central Africa, PAU Institute for Space Sciences (PAUSS) in South Africa-Southern Africa and PAU Institute for Water and Energy (Including Climate Change) (PAUWE) in Algeria-Northern Africa. Each institute is allocated in one the major African Union geographical regional with a unique thematic areas and specific thematic partner. When it opened the doors for its first time in 2012; it launched three institutes.

The launching of the Pan African University (PAU) institutes for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (PAUSTI) in Kenya, Life and Earth Sciences (PAULESI) in Nigeria and Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences (PAUGHSS) in Cameroon, have brought to the fore some challenges that Africa and African Union (the guardian and parent of the university) has to face if it is to succeed in organising the university at the continental level that serves as the icon of Africa and its unity and that can guide the continent in its integration agenda.

Within short period of its existence, the university have proved inability to educate the African for the continent. The major challenges include embracing western content; continued dependence on donor funding and subjecting the continent to another partition through paring and orienting institutes towards the interests of thematic partner. This trap set, if not carefully analysed may soon reflect imbalances between and among the university's institutes that may reflect the economic muscles of the thematic partner.

PAU as a continent institute is better positioned to deliver and if well organised can provide a way forward towards the realisation of the RIA. In this regard, for it to deliver; while mainstreaming education and working towards harmonised education in Africa; this institute should begin by promoting African content oriented towards addressing African challenges and providing reliable solution to African problems for the realisation of *Pax Africana*!

This institute have to be locally funded to avoid making it another centre for the promotion of western culture and ideas that in most cases are not very helpful to the continent. A challenge is therefore before us all; to review our integration agenda to see it and the extent it is determined in working with such institutes that can help in the realisation of quadric pillars of RIA. A way have been paved by African Development Bank (AfDB) which have signed an agreement to dish out its funding to the university of worth 45 million US dollars (AU, 2013a). Such assistance should be among the priorities for RIA. In each time when we think of supporting initiatives such as construction of infrastructure such as roads and airports we should also think of supporting institutes that we have relegated to train and prepare professionals and manpower that is dearly needed for to realise the RIA vision.

Lastly, there is a need of specifying the language to be used as a means of instruction. The choice to be made had a lot to contribute for the future of the continent. As a university it has to have a common language that will unite all the graduates. Here the future should focus on using African languages such as Kiswahili, Hausa and Arabic. Of all Kiswahili is better positioned but cannot immediately be adopted as the language for instruction. English or French may continue for some times but with the plan to replace it by African language which should be a compulsory in all universities in Africa. It has to overcome challenges that have been at the neck of Africans making it hard for them to unite. This will facilitate the easy movement of the graduates to serve whenever need is within the continent. If this is done the university will likely become a symbol

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of African unity within one language! This ought to be the Pan African University language, the language of RIA and the uniting language for all Africans.

4. CONCLUSION

Throughout this discussion; an argument has been advanced for the need to mainstream education as the only way and means for practical realisation of RIA. While mainstream is possible, that should not be RIA's ultimate objective but rather as a transition step towards establishing and offering educated crafted by and in Africa for the services of the continent. To do this we need to review RIA's funding agenda to list education as among the major priorities for the projects to be undertaken. While money alone cannot do all what is required; a call is made to political leaders and the academia to take this to their political and research agenda so as to offer the best they can do to make this dream RIA a reality. God bless Africa!

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