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Building Partnerships through Shared Knowledge

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Policies and Conditionalities: The experiences of Higher Educational Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa with a Multinational Financial Institution

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by

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Abstract

Higher education in Africa has had a checkered history, smeared with multitude of challenges. While some of these challenges were inherited from the colonial educational setup, others emanated from misguided internal political developments. In addition, Africa's socio-economic development has been impacted by unfair global economic practices and the forces of "globalization and its discontent". However, although African governments remain major funders of their institutions, the continent's educational system in general has enjoyed the benevolent support from bilateral donor funding and multilateral lending regimes. The impacts of these bilateral and multilateral agreements have mixed results. This paper chronologically reviews the role the World Bank (the Bank) in the development of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The paper utilizes various World Bank documents, selected countries' policy reviews, and literature on the World Bank's policy impact studies. The author traces the Bank's educational initiatives in Africa from the 1960s through the beginning of the 21st century. The author looks at the contradictory World Bank policy initiatives toward SSA and how the World Bank contributed to the derailment and development of Africa's tertiary education system. The overarching goal of the paper is to provide portraiture of African higher education realities as a backdrop for further analysis and future change.

Author's Biography

Francis Atuahene is an Associate Professor and Faculty Academic Advisor at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, USA. Dr. Atuahene earned his BA (Hons.) in Political Science and Philosophy from the University of Ghana. He also earned an MA in International Affairs, MPA in Political Science, and a PhD in Higher Education Administration from Ohio University-Athens. Dr. Atuahene's research interests span across contemporary issues in international comparative higher education with particular concentration on educational accessibility, finance and cost sharing, student development and retention. He has published peer-reviewed articles in leading journals in the fields of educational policy, student loans scheme, research capacities in African universities and college student retention.

Objective/Purpose

Higher education in Africa has had a checkered history, smeared with multitude of challenges. While some of these challenges were inherited from the colonial educational setup, others emanate from internal political developments and the implementation of obnoxious external policy prescriptions by donor agencies. For several decades, Africa's higher education system has received major support from the global community in the form of bilateral donor funding and multilateral lending regimes. The impacts of these bilateral and multilateral agreements are mixed in their outcomes/results. This paper provides a critical anatomy of the role multinational financial institution, the World Bank (the Bank) in the development of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). As a policy analysis, the paper utilizes various World Bank documents, selected countries' reports, policy reviews, and literature on the World Banks' policy impact studies. The author traces the Bank's educational initiatives in Africa from the 1960s through the beginning of the 21st century. The paper provides a symmetrical assessment of the contradictory World Bank policy initiatives toward Sub-Saharan Africa. The author discusses how the World Bank contributed to the development and derailment of Africa's tertiary education system, and its current policy stance. The overarching goal of the paper is to provide portraiture of African higher education realities as a backdrop for further analysis and future change. This paper is partitioned into four distinct parts: the first part summarizes the history of higher education in Africa; part two looks into post-independence challenges especially, the period between 1960 and 1980; part three analyzes the era of aid dependence, the World Bank involvement, the impact of policies and conditionalities on higher education from the mid-1990s through the end of the 20th century, the final part presents the current stance of the Bank's policy towards Africa and future directions. The author provides reflections and comments on the final part of the paper.

A brief history of higher education in Africa

Higher education in Africa has a long history; it is as old as the pyramids of Egypt, the obelisks of Ethiopia, and the Kingdom of Timbuktu (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). The history of higher education in Africa is the history of internationalization, globalization, and partnerships. This history, however tortuous it may be, helps us to understand the factors that have contributed to the development of tertiary educational institutions, their challenges, and current transformations. Thus, any study of higher education in Africa must be prefaced by at least a cursory discussion of the factors that have contributed to their establishment and reformation. Africa's continued relationship with former colonial powers, allies and proxies such as donor and multilateral corporations, the World Bank and IMF provides the basic justification for discussing the history of the higher education in the continent (Assie-Lumumba, 2006). Just like the continent's political history, higher educational institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa bear the semblances of its colonial and metropolitan institutions especially for those created by the British and France.

Historically, it is important to note that prior to the colonial institutions, there existed some higher educational institutions in some parts of the continents. Today, it is believe that the oldest institution still existing is traced to Africa before the last two or three BC and AD – the library of Alexandria model and the monastery system (Lulat, 2003). With the propagation of Islam in North and West Africa, several traditional institutions of higher education were created. For example, the Ez-Zitouna madrassa in Tunis founded in 732, Karawiyyin in Fez (Morocco) created in 859 AD, Al-Azhar in Cairo was established in 970, which is considered as the oldest institution of higher education in the world still operating, and from the twelfth century Sankore was created in Timbuktu (Assie-Lumumba, 2006). These institutions have survived to this day, although they have undergone major westernizing transformations (Lulat, 2003; Assie-Lumumba, 2006).

The emergence of colonialism and the missionary activities in the continent also ushered a new wave of higher education development in Africa – what has become the modern university. Within British West Africa, among the first major institutions established in the 19th century were Fourah Bay College in Freetown in 1826, Gordon Memorial College in Khartoum in 1898, Lovedale Institution in South Africa in 1841, the University of Cape of Good Hope in 1873 and Victoria College in Stellenbosch in 1829. Considering that the British has the largest protectorates in the continent, one would have expected an early development of higher education, however, the development of higher education was not considered a major political priority of the British government. Politically, the development of higher education in the continent was slow. Not until the mid-1940s, Fourah Bay College remained the only institution of higher education in Africa. Those that were developed were also assigned narrow focus – that is training few African men to assist the running of colonial administration. The curriculum was narrowly focused on the Arts and Humanities with little attention paid to Science, Agriculture, etc. and the critical areas that Africa needed during the years of nation building and development. The resulting impact was that access to higher education was by design restricted to only few parts of the continent.

Other colonial influence such as the Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy, etc., impacted Africa's educational development. Their legacies provide critical understanding of contemporary issues facing higher education in the continent. However, although few centers of higher education were established during the colonial era, access was quite limited partly because of the fear of opposition of educated Africans. Some colonists especially the Belgians even prohibited establishing higher education in the colonies (Altabach and Teferra, 2004). Some countries attained independence without the necessary human personnel needed to run their states apparatus. A World Bank report of 1991 indicates that, as at independence, more than 75 percent of professional civil service positions in various independent African nations were held by expatriates or foreigners (Altabach and Teferra, 2004). Most trades and industries were foreign-owed. The university of East Africa serving Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda turned out only 99 graduates for a population of over 23 million. Some countries attained independence without a single lawyer, doctor or engineer. Zaire, for example, had only 16 graduates in the 1960s, while Burundi had none (Hoffman, 1996). By 1960, only 18 of the 48 African countries in SSA had a university or some form of tertiary educational institutions (Sawyer, 2002).

Higher education in the post-independence era and challenges

One important outcome of the creation of Fourah Bay College in Freetown was that it came to play an important role during the decolonization process as many African Nationalists received their education from this institution (Lulat, 2003). It also served as the center for missionary training of many Africans religious ministers. As many countries gained their political independence, the need to expand access to higher education remains the center piece of Africa's decolonization and independence agenda. Higher education in the new found states then became a publicly provided entity, constitutionally, financed by the central government. Thus, during the immediate afterglow of independence in the 1950s and 1960s, many Sub-Saharan African countries looked to higher education as a fundamental vehicle of economic and political development. Mostly, the new independent countries devoted substantial economic and human resources to projects that demonstrated the priority of tertiary education (Hoffman, 1996). In almost in every country, higher education was tied to national developmental. First generation African leaders saw the development of higher education for the socio-economic development of their various countries, hence the justification for governments involvement during the 1950 and 1960s.

Sanyal (1998) advocated three arguments in support of state control of higher education in both developed and developing countries. First, the postcolonial era required the replacement of foreign expatriates with qualified nationals to be in charge of the administration of public institutions. This demanded that governments invest in higher education to train more qualified personnel, who would be responsible for the efficient and effective running of the state apparatus. Thus, government control over higher education was imperative immediately after independence. Second, it is widely accepted that investment in higher education leads to social and economic development. The development of efficient and effective higher education systems occurs in tandem with knowledge creation and social and economic development (Sanyal, 1998). This argument has recently been reiterated in Bloom, Canning and Chan (2006) study on higher education and economic development. Governments, ideally represents all citizens, and has to play an active role in the development of human capital to meet the country’s developmental objectives. Finally, the state’s control of higher education stems from the government’s agenda to ensure equity in and access to higher education by subsidizing the costs for less advantaged citizens. Sanyal (1998) further argued that unless the state subsidizes higher education, many people will not benefit from it and higher education will be dominated by the rich and elite of society. Undoubtedly, African leaders found these arguments convincing as the justification for state intervention in higher education.

Governments' commitment to education in general increased leading to increase in enrollment from the 1960s through the mid-1990s, albeit this achievement was comparatively lower than other developing countries in the world within the same period. In 1965 the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) as a percent of eligible students for primary education was 53.4%, secondary education was 6.3% and tertiary education was 0.8%. By 1997, this has increased to 92% for primary education, 35.1% for secondary education and 2.3% for tertiary education level (Assié-Lumumba, 2006). The growth in the tertiary education is partly attributed to the emergence of new private higher educational institutions that started mostly in the 1990s.

While on the average Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP increased from 2.5% in 1966 to 3.7% in 1997, the expenditure per student in higher education as a percent of GNI drastically decreased from 1490.8% to just 107.2% in 1997. On average, the continent has devoted 0.78% of its gross domestic product to tertiary education, compared with 0.66% on average for other developing countries and 1.21% for the OECD countries. Unfortunately, this has not translated to the relative level of participation. Africa has the lowest participation rate in higher education in the world. Available data from UNESCO show that the average tertiary education GER in Africa was 8% in 2011. This range differs among countries, for instance, in 2009 the tertiary GER exceeds the regional average in the following countries: Cameroon (9.0%), Cape Verde (14.9%), Côte d'Ivoire (8.4%), Guinea (9.2%), Mauritius (25.9%), Namibia (8.9%) and Senegal (8.0%). Countries that recorded lower GER were: Burkina Faso (3.4%), Burundi (2.7%), Central African Republic (2.5%), Chad (2.0%), Eritrea (2.0%), Ethiopia (3.6%), Madagascar (3.6%), Malawi (0.5%), Niger (1.4%) and Uganda (3.7%).

In most countries, Governments' commitment to education remains positive, but higher education is capital intensive and with the competing social services, the support for higher education has declined over the years. A World Bank report in 2010 indicates that the decline in public expenditure per student is having an adverse impact on the quality and relevance of education programs. The report added “Africa is the only region in the world that has experienced a decrease in the volume of current public expenditure per student (30 percent over the last 15 years)” (p.2). Meanwhile the annual public expenditure per student was relatively high at US$2,000 in 2006, two times the amount allocated to non-African developing countries. The “annual public expenditure per student in Africa therefore represents nearly three times GDP per capita, compared to only one-third in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and 1.2 times GDP per capita at the global level” (World Bank, 2010, p.2).

However, the tremendous optimism shown by African Governments during the immediate years of independence was withered due to various political and economic factors - incalculable militarization of Africa’s political system, and the unbridled economic instabilities during the 1970 and 1980s. The corollary was declining public support for universities. Throughout the continent there was massive decline in provision of social services, especially, in Francophone countries (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). For example, public recurrent expenditure per tertiary student in sub-Saharan Africa fell from $6,461 in 1975 to $2,365 in 1983 (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). Universities are faced with turbulent of challenges including limited access, financial austerity, limited research management capacities, deteriorating academic and residential infrastructure, poor governance, brain drain and the exodus of talented academics to the West and other countries. Most countries faced student activism due to unfavorable educational conditions. The long fought independence agenda, the faith in higher education as an instrument of social, economic and political engineering disappeared in thin air. In some countries, the academics were targeted and conceived as politically alien and the number one enemy of the ruling military compradors. A report by the World Bank show that regional per capita output in Africa reduced from $525 in 1970 to $336 in 1997. Unfavorable terms of trade for Africa’s primary and agricultural product. Many countries became heavily indebted to the West.

These economic and political developments became the centripetal forces of the World Bank’s policy initiative toward Africa’s educational system. Between the 1970 and 1980s, the Bank issued four major educational policy documents with one specifically dealing with Africa. The Bank became dissatisfied about the overly concentration of national resources to higher education by African governments, which has not yielded results – socio-economic development. The Bank argued that universities are highly priced enclaves whose returns do not merit investment (Samoff and Carrol, 2004). By this philosophy, African leaders were made to de-emphasize the allocation of public resources to higher education and redirect them to the pre-tertiary education levels (specifically, primary education). This policy initiative marked the watershed of the Bank’s derailment of tertiary education in Africa. In 1990 this agenda was publicly echoed at the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), convened in Jomtien, Thailand by the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP. About 1500 people representing 155 governments, 33 intergovernmental bodies, and 125 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), institutes, and foundations participated in this conference. Organized in response to the widespread concern over the deterioration of education systems during the 1980s, the Conference concluded with the unanimous adoption of the "World Declaration on Education for All" and endorsed a "Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs” (The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, 1993). This policy was globally minted, and resources were directed to expand access at the primary education level. But in Africa, the move to basic education was quite dramatic. With the already declining economies, not only was the share of governments' educational budget as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) plummeted, but it was economically impossible to meet the budgetary needs of all three educational sectors – primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. By policy, higher education institutions were to find alternative sources of financial support.

Donor support and the African higher education conundrum

While colonial policies resulted in the late development of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, some of the current challenges facing Africa's educational system could partly be attributed to the obnoxious policies and poor direction of African political leaders. Politically, higher education in African was chronically separated and alienated from the national developmental agenda by military leaders who seized power from democratically elected governments. The external environments played a major role in the development and deterioration of higher education in SSA. Right from its genesis, higher educational institution in Africa benefited from a strong state support with minimal funding problems. In addition to the internal support African Governments provided to their institutions, higher education in the continent in general received massive external support from donor countries during the immediate years of post-independence. Among the prominent donors that supported Africa higher education were Belgium, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), German Academic Exchange Service, Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFIC), Norwegian Agency for International Development, the Britain's Inter-University Council for Higher Education Oversea, and the United States Agency for International Development, (USAID). These bilateral agencies provided wide array of support in the areas of academic and residential building construction, academic scholarships for students, and assistance with programs and curriculum development, and support for faculty and staff development.

In addition to these agencies was the role played by the International Financial Corporation and the International Development Association (the World Bank) - International Development Association (IDA) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). Though the World Bank has monopolized policy decision in higher education in the Global South, it did not provide loans for academic development of institutions in the continent other than funds for bricks and mortar (infrastructural development). In fact, not until 1968 when Robert McNamara became the president of the Bank, support for higher education was not considered as part of the Bank's major priorities (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). The Bank's educational priority was to develop the poorest part of society, and in this notion, primary and secondary education were emphasized. The focus of the World Bank was to expand educational access to many children at the bottom of the pyramid than the few at the top (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). As already mentioned above, this argument was strengthened by the Bank's Rate of Returns (ROR) studies, the human capital theory. The Bank argued the private benefits of higher education exceed the social benefits compared to the contributions of primary and secondary education to national economy (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002). This neo-liberal funding approach marked the watershed of events leading to the deterioration of Africa's higher educational institutions. The Bank drastically reduced funding and support for higher education (Bollag, 2003). This situation was also exacerbated by the deteriorating economic condition resulting from rampant political instabilities in several countries in the 1960s throughout the 80s. Between 1963 and 1990, the Bank allocated merely 12% of its total educational budget to the tertiary sector. By the mid-1990s higher education in Africa was bedeviled with litany of challenges – deteriorating physical infrastructure, financial austerity, and poor incentives to retain distinguished academic personnel, outdated library and science facilities.

As many African countries face political and economic instabilities, the World Bank came out with the Structural Adjustment Policies/Programs (SAPs) in a publication entitled: *Education Policy for Sub-Saharan Africa: Adjustment, Revitalization, and Expansion* (World Bank, 1988) as a panacea to the Africa economic dilemma. Contrary to the expectations of African Governments, this document did not have any specific policy to enhance higher education system in the continent; instead, the document proposed neoliberal market policies such as privatization of state owed enterprises. Among the market principles introduced by SAP was the imposition of tuitions and fees in a system that is already plunged with multitude of challenges. In the face of rapid declining of national revenues, many African countries were convinced to accept the conditionalities of the IMF/World Bank-imposed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in return for such assistance (African Union, 2006). SAP requires reduction in government involvement in the provision of social services followed by outrageous financial austerity measures. Public subsidies to education were reduced drastically, currency devaluation was imposed on countries to pave way for cheap exports of raw materials to the West, divestiture of public owed corporations was implemented that paved way for reckless privatization policies, which contributed to huge capital flight in most countries, and of course higher education suffered due to complete state support. As a result of these policies Africa's expenditure on the education system fell to an average of 5 and 7 percent of GDP between 1991/92 and 2002/03 fiscal years (Vos et al., 2004, p. 1). In return Governments were forced to introduce cost sharing mechanisms for poor students and their families who were already struggling in an unstable economic condition to contribute towards their education. SAP became the hemorrhage in African political, economic and social development during this period. In Ghana, estimated government subvention to the universities declined by 60 percent in real terms between 1991 and 2000; and in Nigeria, allocation per student declined from 3424 naira in 1975/76 to 409 naira in 1989/90; in Uganda, for instance, the share of national recurrent budget spent on education went from 21 percent in 1983/84 to 12.2 percent in 1988/89; (Sawyerr, 2002).

By implementing SAP, Africa's public debt soared from $6 billion in 1970 to $170 billion in 1998 (World Bank, 1999 cited in Ilon, 2003). Meanwhile, the Bank's lending support for Africa's higher education declined from 14.5% in 1976 to 7.8% in 1983, compared to an increase in primary education spending from 13.9% to 22.6% (Ilon, 2003). This was followed by the Bank's review in 1995 in a document entitled: *Priorities and Strategies for Education, a World Bank Review* (World Bank 1995). In this document the World Bank noted:

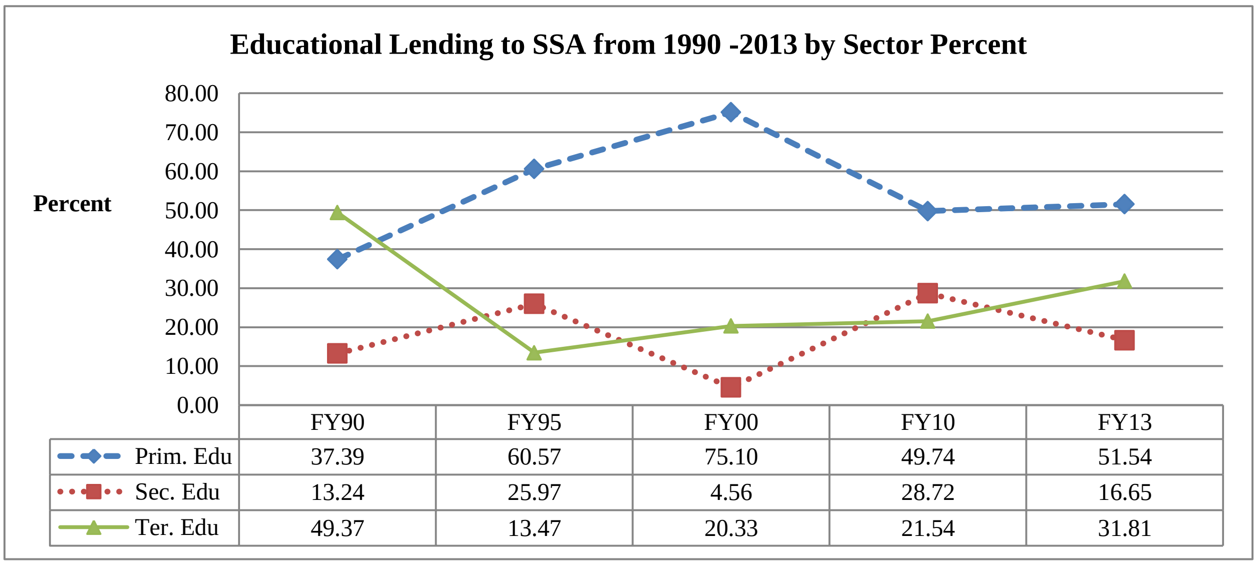
> Basic education will continue to receive the highest priority in the Bank's education lending to countries that have not achieved universal literacy and adequate access, equity and quality at that level…As the basic education system develops in coverage and effectiveness, more attention can be devoted to the upper-secondary and higher levels (p.16). The Bank further argues that:
>
> The high rates of return estimated for basic education in most developing countries strongly suggest that investments to improve enrollments and retention in basic education should generally have the highest priority in countries that have not yet achieved universal basic education…Countries that have largely achieved universal primary and lower-secondary education are likely to consider upper-secondary and higher education the priorities (World Bank, 1995, p.9).

As Bollag (2003) noted in his report, during the period between 1985 and 1989, about 17% of all education lending in SSA was directly for higher education, as compared to 29% for primary education. At the same time during the period between 1995 and 1999, the corresponding figures were 7% for higher education and 46% for primary education.

> "Thus, following the 1990 Jomtien World Education Conference, calling for universal primary education by 2000, this renewed priority for primary education was clearly reflected in the Bank's lending program. However, while the volume of lending for higher education declined, at the end of the 1990s, the Bank continued to finance higher components in education sector programs in about 20 countries, i.e., in more than half of the countries where the Bank provided direct financial support for education." (p.iii).

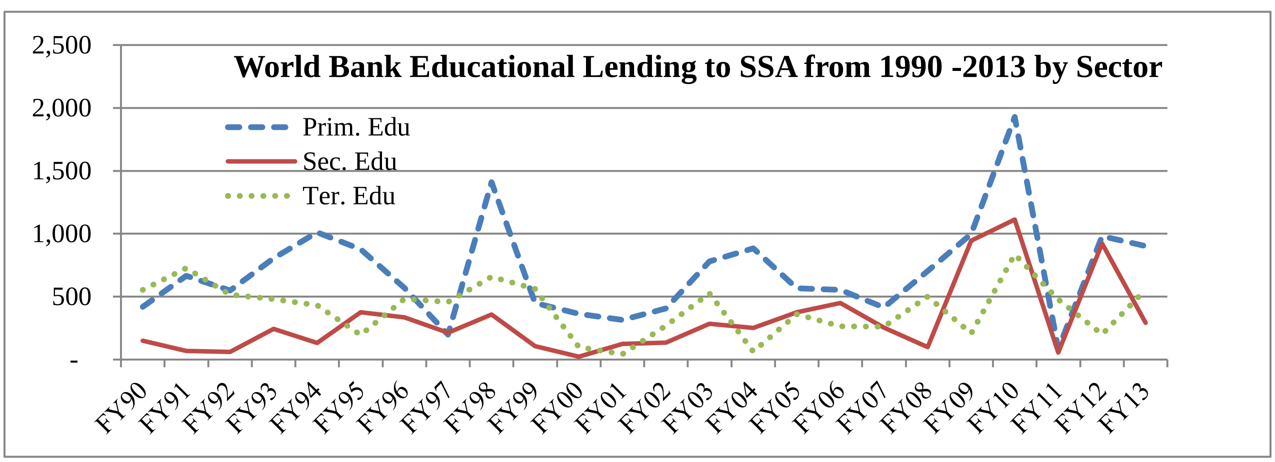
As shown in the figure 1and 2, the average IDA/IBRD educational lending to SSA has been higher for pre-tertiary education from 1990 through 2013. About 50.63 % of the 1990 support went into pre-tertiary education. In 1995, the percentage of the Bank commitment to education in SSA that went to per-tertiary education level was 86.53%. During the 2013 fiscal year 31.81% of the educational lending to SSA went into higher education levels.

Figure 1: **Educational Lending to SSA from 1990 -2013 by Sector Percent (IDA/IBRD)**



	FY90	FY95	FY00	FY10	FY13
Prim. Edu	37.39	60.57	75.10	49.74	51.54
Sec. Edu	13.24	25.97	4.56	28.72	16.65
Ter. Edu	49.37	13.47	20.33	21.54	31.81

Figure 2: **World Bank Educational Lending to SSA from 1990 -2013 by Sector (IDA/IBRD)**



By the 1990s, the World Bank realized that by shifting the focus from higher education, not only have their policy directive affected the African higher education system, but also, they have actually affected program development at the primary and secondary levels. For instance, Teacher Training Colleges did not have the required lecturers to prepare teachers for the primary schools, secondary schools were graduating studies, but universities did not have the capacity to absorb qualified students. In additional Africa lost its intellectual power (Bollag, 2003). Access to and participation in higher education was limited. His schools were producing too many students without the necessary capacities to absorb them at the tertiary level. Throughout the last decade of the 20th century, that Bank was convinced of it policy impacts and the deterioration of higher education in Africa, thus, a change of policy became paramount.

Policy change and current developments

After decades of neglecting higher education in Africa, the Bank reconsidered its approach and concluded that if Africa and other developing nations want to catch-up with the global North, a vibrant higher education system is a necessity. This was clearly articulated by the World Bank's former president, James Wolfenson, who suggested that a strong higher education system with centers of excellence, learning and training is necessary for a country's advancement is important for developing countries. A well-developed higher education system would not only train and prepare the human capital potential needed for the knowledge economy, but also well-educated citizens have the potential for contributing to the social development of a country.

The Bank refocused on the university system and emphasized technology, new inventions, government intervention, and basic education supported by a strong university system (Banya & Elu, 2001; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). In 1997 the Bank piloted the African

Virtual University (AVU) educational system based on the distance education philosophy in Nairobi, Kenya, which has been operating since 2002. AVU employs modern telecommunications technology to provide world-class quality education and training programs to students and professionals in Africa through 34 Learning Centers in 19 African countries. Partnered with African Universities, AVU operates in French and English to identify the most essential programs needed for Africa's development. Recognizing the importance of higher education for economic development, the Bank released another important document entitled: *Knowledge for Development* in 1998. In this document, the Bank acknowledges the knowledge gap between countries in the Global North and the Global South. It noted, "Poor countries—and poor people—differ from rich ones not only because they have less capital, but because they have less knowledge. Knowledge is often costly to create, and that is why much of it is created in industrial countries" (World Bank, 1998, p.4). Thus, the need to close the knowledge gap was necessary for poverty reduction and alleviation in the developing world new policy initiatives.

As part of its policy shift and support for the overall development of the continent, the Bank believes that developing countries in general have to expand access, develop alternative funding sources, and improve research management capacities in their universities for a sustainable democratic development. For example, the Bank raised the awareness concerning the importance of tertiary education, research and development in its 2000 report, *Higher Education in Developing Nations: Peril and Promise* that higher education is the conduct for building a vibrant democratic and accountable political system while promoting spaces for research and knowledge dissemination. This was echoed by the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan in his 2000 address that:

> The university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century. Universities can help develop African expertise; they can enhance the analysis of African

> problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as a model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights, and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars (UNIS, 2000, unnumbered document)

Further the Bank's 2002 report *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* recognized as a 'critical pillar for human development' and also serves as a platform for training high-level skills necessary for every labor market. Although, this document stressed pre-tertiary education, the Bank recommended that countries should inject not more than 20% of their educational budget to the tertiary level. The document stressed the role of tertiary education in strengthening primary and secondary education. Contrary to its previous obsession with ROR argument, the World Bank indicated that countries should not only focus on the human capital argument, but also consider the external benefits of higher education to their socio-economic development. In 2006, the World Bank provided several empirical evidence in *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa* to support the role of higher education in economic development, while the 2008 report, *Accelerating Catch-up: Tertiary Education for Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa* chronicled the achievements made in primary and secondary education in Africa and the need to garner resources to increase enrollment at post-secondary education to prepare Africans the skills need to compete in the knowledge-based economy. The World Bank commissioned it Africa Action Plan for 2006-2008. In the plan, the Bank identified the higher education for building the skills needed for growth in the competitive labor market. The Bank reechoed the important of higher education in strengthening knowledge in science and technology, the ability to assess and use existing information and generate new understanding through research (Bloom, et. al. 2006). The Bank recognized the adoption of a well-balanced educational system linking all level for broader human capital development.

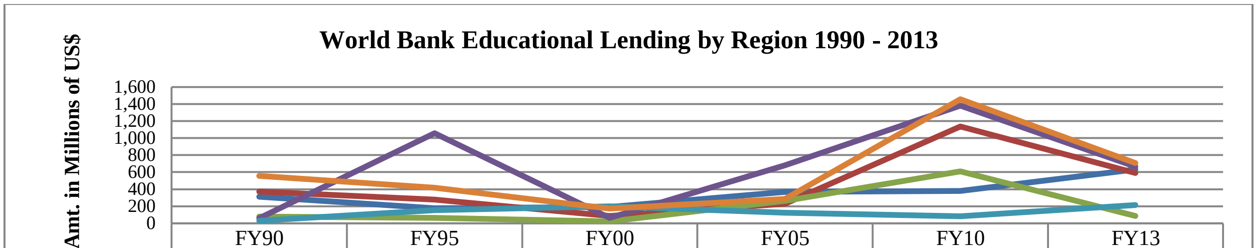
These policy changes over the past few years have impacted the higher education environment in Africa. Several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have developed various strategies to overhaul their tertiary education systems. A few examples worth noting: In Benin, the goal of higher education is to provide equity for all students, while strengthening the quality of academic programs and training for self-employment, and control of the cost of education; the government of Cameroun in 2003 developed vocational, educational and professional training to facilitate integration into the labor market, and developing partnerships with the private sector; in Cote d'Ivoire, the Ministry of education in 2002 proposed strategies to improve quality of teaching and decentralize higher education, strengthen vocational training and reduce dropout rates in universities; and the Ministry of Education in Ghana in 2003 is poised to improve vocational training, improve access and provide entrepreneurial training at the universities, polytechnics and agricultural colleges (Bloom, et. al. 2006).

As part of the World Bank's policies and Conditionalities, so many countries – Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have introduced effective market strategies into their higher education. In 1990 the World Bank refused to grant an emergency loan of $600 million to Kenya. Instead, the Bank offered $60 million education sector credit to overhaul the country's universities. The World Bank required Kenya to reform its free higher education through effective financial management practices - introduce tuition and fees (i.e. cost sharing mechanisms). Despite previous opposition from students, and lecturers' strikes, Kenya successfully implemented this policy and established student loan programs to support higher education students (Samoff and Carol, 2004). Today Kenya is among the few African countries that have established alternative admission program for tuition-paying students. Ghana, considered as a success story by the World Bank received huge support from the World Bank in the 1980s to restructure its educational system. A major achievement of this reform was the reduction of the number of years students spent in pre-tertiary education from 17 to 12 years. The Bank also gave Ghana $45 million credit from 1993-1999, the Tertiary Education Project (TEP) to improve the quality of higher education institutions in the country. Between 1991 and 1999 the total number of student attending public universities in Ghana increased from 10,000 to 26,000. TEP also required Ghana to adopt massive measures to achieve financial sustainability, increase access and strengthen management and governance (Girdwood, 1999). While the World Bank recognized TEP as unsatisfactory, over the years, the government and the Ministry of Education in Ghana has successfully introduced working policies to strengthen the country’s higher education system. Ghana has successfully established an educational Trust Fund to support research, faculty development and students scholarship (Atuahene, 2009). Like Kenya, Ghana established the dual admission scheme as a source of raising income to support academic programs.

In addition to the progress witnessed in Ghana and Kenya, various countries are making concrete commitments to improve their higher education system: Burkina Faso has increased its higher education participation by over 50percent, Burundi has established a National Education and Training Plan to strengthen technical education and university programs; Cameroon increased its private sector involvement in capacity development including physical infrastructure; in Madagascar universities have recruited and hired over 100 lecturers; Ghana has increased its higher education offering by establishing regulatory policy to increase sector involvement, established an educational trust fund to improve funding for research and professional development, and established the dual admission policy to increase participation of underrepresented minorities; Malawi reserves 30 percent of university places for female students, introduced scholarship schemes for girls and needy students; expand university places from 3526 to 6824. Universities in East Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania Uganda have all established the parallel admission/dual enrollment policy to increase enrollment and raise revenue. Specifically Uganda increased tertiary enrollment from 25,000 in 2000 to 50,000 in 2003 (Bloom et. al. 2006).

More specifically, the Bank has increased its lending to SSA relative to other regions of the World. Figures 3a and 3b show IDB/IBRD educational commitments to various regions of the world from 1990-2013. The impact of these funding initiatives remain critical in the higher educational success that we currently have witnessed in some countries.

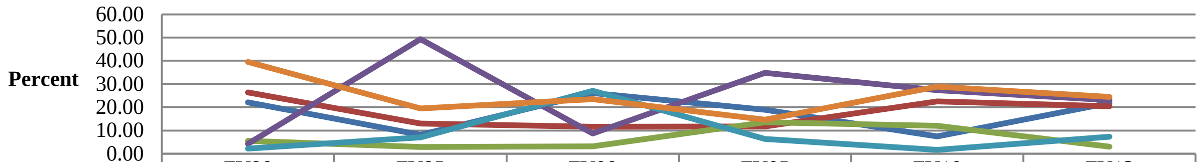
Figure 3a



	FY90	FY95	FY00	FY05	FY10	FY13
AFR	310	175	190	369	378	631
EAP	371	277	84	228	1,137	589
ECA	77	63	23	264	608	86
LCR	61	1,058	63	680	1,379	664
MNA	30	152	197	124	82	213
SAR	555	417	171	286	1,456	705

Figure 3b

World Bank Educational Lending by Region (percent) 1990-2013



	FY90	FY95	FY00	FY05	FY10	FY13
AFR	22.09	8.17	26.06	18.91	7.50	21.87
EAP	26.44	12.94	11.59	11.68	22.56	20.38
ECA	5.46	2.95	3.12	13.52	12.06	2.97
LCR	4.32	49.38	8.63	34.85	27.36	23.01
MNA	2.16	7.08	27.07	6.36	1.63	7.37
SAR	39.53	19.48	23.53	14.68	28.89	24.41

Within Sub-Saharan Africa, the Bank's continues to increase its lending support in major higher educational projects. A few examples include the higher education projects in Ethiopia, Mauritania, Mozambique and Uganda's Millennium Science Initiatives. The government of Mozambique received US$60m to implement the Higher Education Project from March 2002 to June 2010. The Development objectives of the Higher Education Project for Mozambique were to:

a) enhance internal efficiency and expand the output of graduates;

b) improve equitable access (gender, location, and socio-economic); and

c) improve the quality of the teaching-learning process and the relevance of the curriculum.

Three project components were identified.

a) The first component finances activities to support overall policy and system reform and development, including new regulatory, fiscal, and accountability frameworks; new pedagogical teaching methods and programs; the use of ICTs in the delivery and teaching of higher education; an accreditation system; new or alternative sources of funding; and a HIV/AIDS prevention and support program for students.

b) The second component focuses on institutional development and investments, improving efficiency, academic and pedagogical quality, research, and the scope of service delivery of specific institutions, and

The third component that was piloted before expanding nationally, initiated the introduction and operation of a publicly run and publicly financed scholarship scheme that will provide financial assistance, student outreach, and academic advisory services. The World Bank, Report No: ISR9230).

In Ethiopia, the Bank provided a five-year loan of US$40m from September 2004 to September 2009 to the Ministry of Education to implement the Post-Secondary Education Project, which directly supports one of the Government's primary national development, and sectorial goals as identified in Ethiopia's Poverty Reduction Strategy: the expansion and strengthening of human capacity, to lead the transition from an agrarian economy, to a service and production oriented one (The World Bank, 2010). The two main components of the project were:

a. improve university undergraduate and post-graduate education, through a) institutional development grants to support basic capital expenses of eligible institutions, on a proportionate basis in accordance with the Government's new funding formula for block grants. This grants was provided support for (a) the Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency (QRAA), the Ethiopian Higher Education Strategy Institute (EHESI), the National Pedagogical Resource Center (NPRC) and Institutional Pedagogical Resource Sub-centers, and, the central ministry in the form of resources for some capital expenses, research, seminar development, equipment, publications, and technical assistance; and, (b) through the Development Innovation Fund (DIF), designed to stimulate innovation, promote modernizing changes, and reward quality-enhancing efforts within university development in Ethiopia.

b. expand and deepen the system reform activities currently by developing the capacities to implement the system changes. This capacity development efforts were designed to strengthen the five pillars of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Innovation Program transformation: Decentralization of service design and delivery; Strengthening partnerships among stakeholders, especially between training providers and employers; Development and implementation of a trades testing, and certification system; Cost-sharing by beneficiaries; and, Market-based demand orientation that shapes training. (The World Bank, 2010)

The government of Mauritania also received a US$15m loan for the Ministry of Education for the Higher Education Project aimed at: (i) improving the quality of the learning environment and the relevance of courses to the labor market; and (ii) establishing pedagogic, administrative and financial management systems in the Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) (The World Bank, Report No: ISR9230).

These developments have impacted not only on the quality of academic programs offered in some of these universities in the continent, but also, the various strategic and innovative initiatives introduced have tremendously impacted on various areas such as quality assurance, governance, funding regimes, and the introduction of market principles, such as cost sharing , better regulatory and policy environment, etc. Currently, private universities are mushrooming in almost every part of SSA, although the quality of academic programs offered in some of these newly created universities remain a major concern. Nonetheless the creation of private tertiary education has greatly impacted positively on expansion of access and participation. The number of students attending all forms of tertiary education has more than quadrupled since the 1970s. Globally, it is estimated that the total number of students attending different institutions of higher education increased from 28.6 million in 1970 to 152.5 million in 2007 (representing an increase of 433% within a period of 37 years) with Sub-Saharan Africa registering the highest regional average of 8.6% annually (UNESCO, 2009). In Africa alone, there were about 6 million registered students pursuing some type of higher education between the 1994 and 2000 periods. By the close of 2006, the collective number of students attending tertiary educational institutions in Africa increased to about 9.3 million, an impressive increase of 155 percent (World Bank, 2010) with a projected enrollment increase of about 20 million by the year 2015.

However, available data from the UNESCO (2009) show that tertiary education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa are already under considerable strain and could not accommodate higher growth rates. Universities require significant amount of additional funding; educational planners are faced with the challenge of recruiting qualified academic staff for a system that is doubling in size every eight years. Despite the rapid demand for participation and soaring enrollment from 2.7 million in 1991 to 9.3 million in 2006, resources needed to run public universities remained largely the same (World Bank, 2010) while the per unit cost per student declined from US$6,800 in 1980 to US$1,200 in 2002 (Materu, 2007). The inadequate funding has gravely impacted the higher education system in Africa. Universities across sub-Saharan Africa continue to face severe challenges such as limited academic and infrastructure resources, poor teaching and research management facilities, poor conditions of service to attract high quality and experienced academic personnel, unbridle skill flight, limited academic freedom, limited management capacities at the administrative level, and above all the uncontrolled demand for participation amidst serious financial austerity. Not only have these factors accounted for the demise of quality of education, but also in aggregate the severity of these problems threaten universities' sustainability in meeting the demands of the knowledge-based economy. These challenges have long been recognized by the World, and it continues to propose innovative approaches to address the issues facing universities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Comments and reflections

Higher education in Africa is a global organization, from its creation through the post-independence period to current years. Universities enjoy considerable degree of support from the colonial governments when they were initially created – higher education was constitutionally financed in most countries. Although national governments became the main financier of tertiary education in Africa, most universities become heavily dependent on donor support during the early years of independence. The years following independence opened the doors for bilateral and multilateral donor support. Donor support came in two forms – either foreign aid that were project tied or loans that came with strict conditionalities such as those provided by the World Bank and the IMF. These conditionalities created a huge vacuum in the national educational priorities. Governments and their educational ministries were to kowtow to the whims and caprices of the donor countries, leading to misplaced priorities. During the post-independence era, the World Bank's educational goal was manpower development with the main focus on replacing foreign expatriates. As such the Banks philosophy was based on increasing educational access to vocational and technical education, primary and secondary education with some considerable support in other areas they considered necessary. In the 1970s the Bank's argument focused on human capital formation. The World Bank during this period noted the litany of crisis that Africa educational system face. In addition to its policies, the Bank provided support in the form of technical assistance, which was embraced by Africa Governments and Ministries of Education.

> The World Bank recommends increased attention to vocational and technical education. To address the financial crisis, the World Bank recommends adopting lower cost forms of education (for example, non-formal training), increasing productivity and efficiency (curriculum reform, use of new technologies such as radio and television), and seeking alternate funding sources. Ironically, these two recommendations are in tension, since vocational and technical education often cost more per learner than general education. The World Bank proposes shifting its lending from "hardware" (primarily school construction) to a mix of "hard ware" and "software." (Samoff and Carrol, 2003, p.13)

Moreover, Samoff and Carrol (2003) argue that,

> …while the World Bank has always claimed to provide development expertise, that role has increased significance when knowledge and expertise are assumed to be the key factors of production. Where economic growth and development are understood to be a function of the availability and effective use of land, labor, and capital, a funding agency's role is primarily concerned with capital. Second, the World Bank regularly claims that it is a more sensitive and more effective advocate for the interests of the poor and the disadvantaged than the governments of the countries to which it lends

In summary, African universities have benefited from both bilateral and multilateral agencies' support. The World Bank continues to pursue policies designed to improve performance and internal efficiencies of universities. Funding remains one of the major issues facing higher education development Africa. The World Bank's support is a potential third leg to Africa's educational development. Foreign aid continues to play an important role in Africa's socio-economic development. Although some loans and aids come with conditionalities, it behooves on African leaders to build the institutions and capacities to ensure the efficient implementation of these policies. To the World Bank, conditionalities are necessary to reinvigorate a system that is plunged with multitude of challenges. While conditionalities have been criticized due it its negative impacts on enrollment cap, limiting access for the poor, conditionalities attached to loans and credits given to Africa has led to some success stories in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, which have introduced some form of marketing principles to improve the funding situation of their universities. As succinctly posited by Samoff and Carrol (2003), while it may be tempting to see loan conditionalities as proof of World Bank's direct influence in higher education policy, the ownership of the education reform agenda is more complex. Evidently, there are African officials who favor similar privatization policies espoused by the World Bank. Today, the many positive development transpiring in many African countries remain the frontline of the World Bank's lending initiatives toward Africa. The Bank is encouraged to promote institutional strategic planning, and greater institutional autonomy. To ensure the credibility and standards of academic programs, the Work supports quality assurance and institutional accountability in the efficient use of public resources, and efforts to ensure that tertiary education is responsive to the demand of the knowledge-based economy.

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