
Educational Planning: who does what to whom and with what effect?

Agedew Redie, Dr

I. Introduction

The Ethiopian Government is fully engaged in introducing and implementing economic reform, decentralization through regionalization, and developing sector strategy. As a measure of the new economic policy of 1992 is the formulation of a long-term economic development Strategy--Agriculture development led industrialization (ADLI), which is geared towards the transformation of the economic structure. The sector strategies which are under formulation are expected to serve the implementation of ADLI.

The new educational policy to be implemented by the next academic year focuses on decentralization of educational services, involving the use of nationality languages at the primary level and on practical orientation. The policy implementation strategy includes participation of the communities at the grass root levels in decision making processes, resource generation and management, encouraging private participation; improving the quality and relevance of teaching at all levels and research in the institutions of higher education.

The next intervention is likely to be undertakings in educational planning and programming, and without such detail undertakings implementation of the policy will probably encounter difficulties.

Educational planning, however, is currently in a state of flux. Economists, realizing the

ineffectiveness and inefficiency of educational plan in the past, are talking more like educators: and educators, realizing the need to link education to more directly to national economic and social development goals, are talking more like economists. A third trend is affecting both economists and educator. This trend is spearheaded by politicians who assert that there is a need for a system of education which would respond to community needs thereby creating awareness for a possible role of education in economic and social change in the attainment of new and more appropriate goals.

II. What is Educational Planning?

In his much quoted analysis of the subject, Dror (1963:8) defines planning as "the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future to achieve goals", Anderson (1967) points out that this implies that educational planning should be future oriented and directed towards action; should suggest deliberative behaviour; should show relationships of interlocked decisions in the same and other sectors; should have consistency among its elements; and should allocate resources among various possibilities of action.

This kind of definition is reasonably culture free, moves beyond earlier models which dealt primarily with forecasting, and leaves the door open to various approaches in generating the plan. It implies the need for planning at all levels of the education sector,

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i.e., at national, regional, zonal, *woreda*, community and school levels.

Such a model also influences a planner to distinguish between macro-planning which sets the broad goals and categories of resource allocation, and micro-planning which attempts to work out practical strategies for getting the plan implemented in the field.

All of this, of course, is easier said than done. Such a concept of educational planning suggests the need for comprehensive information on what now exists in the education system, however defined, the apparent cost and effectiveness of each programme in achieving goals, the present relationships between educational activities and other development sectors at all levels, and who the clientele are and what their perceived needs be.

It implies powerful tools of projection so as to be able to estimate with some degree of certainty what might happen in social, economic and political arenas of certain future alternatives chosen in place of others. It implies close coordination with other sectors and in-depth understanding of how human resources developed by and through the educational system which likely will affect and be affected by developments in those sectors.

In many instances, there is inadequate continuity, information and understanding concerning the past, present and possible future inputs; what is actually happening in the system and what might happen with various policy changes; and lack of agreement as to what likely future effect of changes in the system would have on students, the community and the economy as a whole. This

could be rectified by a continuous research activities in the fields of education and allied disciplines.

The fact is that we do not have either the knowledge or the tools as yet to fully understand the inner workings of education and the society or of the effect of education as it interacts with the other sectors and processes.

In essence, current practice in educational planning tends to be much too limited to paper and pencil exercise. In consequence, educational planning in the past suffered from ill-defined objectives and isolation from the community needs. Educational planning should be a long-term developmental process which involves many specialists and institutions in the education sector and other sectors and, indeed, the community itself. The process should be continuous and point in five year plans which are useful only to review progress of the recent past and in setting broad goals and macro strategies for the ensuing planning period.

Micro-planning for implementation, in turn, should be decentralized so as to place appropriate aspects of planning responsibility as close as possible to those who are responsible for the implementation at all levels.

III. Who Plans Education?

In the first development decade of the sixties ministers of general and higher education in Africa recognized human resources as an important input in the economic development process, Agedew (1977, 1987). Since then, national plans have stressed the need for middle and high level manpower and the need for schools and higher education insti-

tutions to prepare this manpower. Educational planning pursued the input and output model, i.e., uneducated people are admitted to school, complete and process of training and trained people useful in productive activities are out. The plans were often handed to educators for implementation. Who should then plan education?

Correa (1975) made a study on the effectiveness of educational planning in Latin America and concluded that "a high proportion of experts with specialization only in education and social science has a negative effect of the degree of implementation of the plans". This implies that educational planners require additional competence in fields other than education.

The ideal, Psacharopoulos (1973) suggests, would be to invite a combination of educators, sociologists, economists, psychologists and politicians to elaborate a macro-educational plan, but this had never worked in practice, in part, because they all have different concerns and have difficulties in talking the same language to one another.

There are also theoreticians like Poster (1975), Schultz (1964) and Spaulding (1977), who feel that central planning in education is self-defeating and that much more decentralized planning and decision making is needed in order to relate education more correctly to the needs of the individuals and communities. This group would stress the relationships of educational activities to the aspirations of local communities, they spread the cost of education among those able to pay, and relate vocational and technical training more directly to the business, industries and traditional enterprises which would employ such skills.

There is, then, no consistency either in theory or in practice as to who, precisely, should plan education.

Educational macro-planning in Ethiopia is done by the Ministry of Education in which there is a department of planning and external relations and has more or less close linkage with the overall economic and social planning organisms in the country. A similar structure has been introduced in the Regions in which there are education Bureaux. The role of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development with respect to harmonization of macro-educational plan is still in place.

The challenge is the micro-planning activities at the Woreda and institutional levels. This would probably be handled during the finalization of the sectors' strategy being advanced by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia.

IV. How is Educational Planning Done?

There are several notions of what the planning process consists of. Educational planning requires information on: Number of schools, type of schools by region and location, number of teachers, their qualifications, their salaries, student flows at various levels (age of students, drop-outs and repeater rates at various levels), capital and recurrent expenditure by year and unit cost at various levels; assessed data on those who are unemployed after years of training and education.

The Ministry of Education and other institutional offices collect such data but their efforts must be strengthened, because these

offices provide data for planning activities to link planning to continuous feedback mechanism and to a policy of reform and improvement.

In terms of the quantitative techniques, the prime goal of educational planning is to optimize the contribution of the education sector to economic growth. And it is logical to assume that some sort of manpower planning would be relevant to education, Schultz (1964).

In 1987, the Commission For Higher Education made a study on the establishment of a manpower analysis unit and the proposal was submitted to the government and as yet there is no manpower analysis unit in most sectors of the economy.

The techniques of human resource assessment range far beyond traditional type of statistical surveys of high level manpower. They involve continuous enumeration of labour force, tracing of career patterns of school leavers and university graduates, the study of labour absorptive capacity of different sectors, the calculation of cost effectiveness of investment in human resource development and many other aspects of training, education and manpower utilization.

Harbison (1964) recommends classification of levels of educational planning with the following:

- 1 Sector surveys which develop a descriptive profile.
- 2 Sector analysis which study the dynamics of the sector.
- 3 Sector strategies which identify courses of action.

- 4 Sector plans or programmes which specify sets of activities to be undertaken in a specified period to implement a sector strategy.

Often the above classification has been used by UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank which send missions to Ethiopia to undertake one or more activities with expected influence on Ethiopia's national plan and development strategy.

In summary, it is evident that:

- ▶ Educational planning models have to be developed for use in Ethiopia at the national and local levels.
- ▶ Educational planning should focus beyond allocation of available resources and should be able to provide options for decision making both for short term interventions and long term goals.
- ▶ Educational planning should continue to refine better quantification of what exists in the education system and how existing facilities can be effectively utilize.
- ▶ The aspiration of youth, communities and the nation as a whole should be clearly defined in the formulation of educational planning.
- ▶ The universities and research centers available in the country should provide back-up support in the identification and preparation of planning activities and in determining community needs. For this specific purpose selected centers of research must be strengthened for data collection, analysis and development of

planning tools. One such focal organs to be strengthened is the Institute of Educational Research in Addis Ababa University which has relatively better experience and competence. It is also imperative that the Institute of Curriculum Development and Research of the Ministry of Education should work closely with Addis Ababa University to foster and attain common objectives.

The new development strategies, such as those which stress employment and equitable distribution of income and services will increasingly affect what happens in the education sector and suggest that educational planning (both quantitatively and qualitatively) must be linked more closely to new concepts of development.

The future probably lies in many small incremental changes through continuous research and development strategies linked to planning efforts. But the change must be systematically planned and managed.

On some of the above issues, further study and research should be initiated aimed at providing better tools for educational planning in Ethiopia; a challenge and opportunity for educational researchers.

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FACTS AND FIGURES

SOME HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

RP: Rural Population; **EPPE:** Enrolment in pre-primary education; **PSE:** Primary & Secondary Enrolment; **TER:** Tertiary Enrolment Ratio; **3rdLSA:** 3rd Level Students Abroad as % of those home; **APG:** Annual population growth; **PEETPE:** Public expenditure on education as % of Total public expenditure.

| Country/Region | Life expect. years | GNP per capita \$US | RP (%) | EPPE (%) | PSE (%) | TER | 3 rd LSA | APG | PEETPE |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|---------|------|---------------------|-----|--------|
| The world (total) | 65.5 | 3,410 | 55 | 29.4 | 78 | 12.2 | - | 1.8 | - |
| Developing count | 62.8 | 710 | 63 | 20.3 | 70 | 6.5 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 15.2 |
| Least Developed | 50.7 | 230 | 80 | 15.0 | 41 | 2.6 | 6.7 | 3.0 | 14.9 |
| Sub-Sahara Af | 51.8 | 470 | | | | 1.5 | 20.7 | 3.2 | 17.2 |
| ---- | -- | -- | Gashaw Abate | | | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Ethiopia | 45.5 | 120 | | | | 0.9 | 17.0 | 3.0 | 9.4 |
| Industrialized count | 74.5 | 12,510 | | | | 33.8 | -- | 0.5 | -- |

Source: UNDP (1991). Human Development Report 1991. (-) means data not available. UNDP and UNESCO (1991) World Education Report 1991.

IER Comments: Study the place of Ethiopia in human development indices and suggest means of improvement for future development strategies.