

Chapter 2

Educational Administration and Leadership in Francophone Africa: 5 Dynamics to Change Education

Boniface Toulassi
Regent University, USA

ABSTRACT

Educational administration and leadership (EAL) is the thermometer and the offspring of the national political leadership. Thus, a realistic national political awareness and conscience becomes the navigational tool towards a rigorous and relevant leadership development for the professionalization of school leaders and teachers, the specification and the quality of the students in a qualitative and relevant education system which incarnates an absolute congruence between educational results and citizens who fit the needs of the globalized village, their time, and countries. La voie par excellence for any strategic, transformational EAL passes through an educational revolution with initiatives and reforms that spearhead the de-politicization, the decolonization, the digitalization, and the internationalization of education in Francophone countries through innovational education in a tripartite partnership: government, business leaders, and the civil society. Leadership development should become an executive goal and project not an entertainment.

INTRODUCTION

Building on *Educational Renaissance in Francophone Africa* (Toulassi, 2013), this chapter points out that the 5 cardinal and navigational points needed to rebirth EAL in Francophone Africa are the five dynamics for change education such as the de-politicization and decolonization of the institution for its democratization, digitalization, and its internationalization with a genuine promotion of female education, all in a tripartite partnership binding the government, business leaders, and the civil society. Essentially, if what is taught in schools today, determines how the future generations will behave, then EAL becomes

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the pillar of the overall development of a country, to keep up with globalization and to successfully lead processes of change (Hallinger, 2003; Kayikçi & Ercan, 2013). Thus, school leaders and managers need educational preparedness “for an interconnected and globally focused workforce and for global civic responsibility” (Agnew, 2013, p. 184). The pathology of higher education in Africa, reveals a system rarely innovative and barely functioning, given the executive negligence, lack of reforms and funding that characterize the institution which holds the pedigree of national development. Thus the prescription highlights the necessity to “prepare students and school leaders for leadership roles in schools, and thus, offer a key arena for transformation and development of future schools’ leadership” (Yemini & Giladi, 2015, p. 424) to prevent higher education in Africa to remain largely peripheral internationally (Alemu, 2014, p. 1).

African Higher Education faces challenges from both external and internal factors such as, from the outside, the asymmetric partnership with the center and non-contextualized policy influence, and from the inside, poor political resolve and incapable capacity and lack of a working system, given that teachers are left behind within the agenda of internationalization of higher education (Burkart & Thompson, 2014, p.1). In that perspective, the best medicine to cure the educational administration and leadership deficiency and time-lag is to meet basic prerequisites - resuscitating the vocation of education, its innovation, digitalization, internationalization, more funding for education, the promotion of key local regional languages – and provide school leaders with relevant EAL know-how through the practice of democratic constructed leadership, a systematic and officially supported gender-balanced leadership development which comes through the breaking the *Apollo culture* which promotes traditionalism and autocratic leadership decisions.

ZOOMING THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SITUATION IN FRANCOPHONE

This section paints the issues, controversies, and problems facing the Francophone educational administration and leadership.

Educational Issues, Controversies, Problems

The sub-Saharan Africa regional ministerial conference on education post-2015, gleaning data from 22 countries indicated some of the greatest continuing challenges identified to achieving Education for All (EFA) goals in Africa namely low enrollment rate of girls compared to boys in school, severe lack of youth skills necessary for employment, and high drop-out rates (42% of African school children leave school early). UNESCO listed the rapid increase in the number of students, brain drain, low course quality, difficulties in governance structures, financial constraints, a growing demand for higher education to contribute more consistently to national development as the difficult challenges facing the higher education. Also, to incorporate views of others, the researcher sent a questionnaire to 30 professionals seeking master’s degree in Administration and Management in an African country. Only one student responded. Though this qualitative research recorded a very low response rate (3.37%), the response highlights how deep and widen the gap between education and professional life in one hand is and how crucially disappointing educational systems are in another. The name of the respondent is initialized for political reasons.

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