Philanthropy and Education of Muslim Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Context of the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

• Philanthropic Initiatives and Education for All (EFA)
• Expenditure on Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Overseas Development Assistance and Education of the Marginalized
• Historicizing Philanthropy and Educational Development in SSA
• The Complexities of Educating Muslim Youth in SSA
• Impact of Gulf State Philanthropy in a rural Ghanaian Community
• Conclusion
PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVES AND EDUCATION FOR ALL IN SSA

• I need to acknowledge the diversity of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The diversity of the region means that I have to be cautious in generalizing some of the issues discussed in the paper.

• Sub-Saharan Africa has made much progress to promote EFA.

• Governments in SSA generally have high expenditures on education.

• Dwindling Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).

• There are many children still out of school in SSA in spite of the efforts over the past three decades.

• Philanthropic initiatives can complement governments’ efforts to promote Education and human development.
GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES ON EDUCATION IN SSA, INTERNATIONAL AID, AND EDUCATION OF MARGINALIZED CHILDREN

- Sub-Saharan African governments’ expenditure on education ranges from 11 percent to 28 percent with an average of 18.3 percent.

- The region also devotes 5.0% of the total GDP (about $1.5 trillion) to public education, which is the second highest percentage globally.

- Dwindling ODA. The total Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) committed to Africa’s education sector was 2.6 in 2008. 2014 EFA Global Monitoring Report shows that aid to education doubled from 2002 to 2008 from US$ 6.5 billion and peaked at US 13.9 in 2008 and 2009 and declined by over US$ 1.3 billion afterwards.

- 57 million children and 67 million adolescents are out of school but total aid to basic education has been falling. Reduction occurs at a time additional finances are need to promote EFA, MDGs and SDGs.

- The “American First” agenda is certainly going to further impact ODA.

- The largest proportion of private funding for education in SSA is generated from individual households— the household contributes 25% of the total national education expenditure.
HISTORICIZING PHILANTHROPY AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SSA

- Defining and Conceptualizing Philanthropy
- “Philo” and “Anthropos”—demonstrating love for humanity
- Reciprocity flowing through social and civic networks of obligation
- Symbiotic
- Philanthropy is rooted in religion—Abrahamic traditions; Dharmic traditions
- A sense of obligation and duty
- Enlightenment: Philanthropy as citizenship and civic responsibility
PHILANTHROPY AND TRADITIONAL AFRICAN WORLDVIEWS

- The South African concept of *Ubuntu* which means “I am because we are” necessitates that community members support each other as a way of social uplift.

- The Swahili concept of *Harambee* which means “pulling together” is rooted in the ideology of charitable support for community members.

- The Yoruba Nigeria concept of *Ajo* and Ghanaian concept of *susu* means coming together to help each other.

- The Akan of Ghana concept of *Nnoobog* is still practiced in rural farming communities in Ghana and is a form of local community support for each other to improve community members’ social life.

- Traditional Africans view of philanthropy is rooted in the idea that “giving was a corporate social and communal responsibility for the survival of the and society.”

- African practice of philanthropy was more “*horizontal*” than “*vertical*”.
EUROPEAN PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVES IN PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL SSA

• A new conceptualization of philanthropy rooted in European self-interests. The following became the props for European philanthropy:

• European development an ethnocentric agenda that saw Africa as a deprived region needing social uplift

• The Christian principle to “take care of the poor” and “welcome the stranger” motivated European Philanthropy. The European viewed the African “other” as primitive and barbaric, non-Christian and uncultured other. The African was the stranger who needed help—the “top-down approach” to philanthropy began here

• Proselytizing project rooted in Christian religion Matt 28: 18-20
EUROPEAN PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVES IN PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL SSA

• Schooling was to be the instrument to change the hearts and mind of the young generation of Africans

• The philanthropy implemented by Europeans had the grand idea to promote mercantilism and further European economic forms. This kind of philanthropy only served to plunge African societies into perpetual position of “needing assistance”.

• Contemporary western philanthropic initiatives have been based on the same props within the rubric of Judeo-Christian tradition and western capitalism
THE COMPLEXITY OF EDUCATING MUSLIM YOUTH IN SSA

• The 2016 Pew Research Center reports a wide margin in Muslim-Christian educational participation in SSA.

• The 2016 Pew study finds large differences in education between Muslims and Christians in SSA and the educational disparities between Muslims and Christians in the region have grown in recent generations.

• The Pew study shows that Muslims are more than twice as likely as Christians in SSA to have no formal schooling.
THE COMPLEXITY OF EDUCATING MUSLIM YOUTH IN SSA

• In terms of generational trends and education in SSA, the Pew study shows that 79% of Muslims compared to 52% of Non-Muslims between the ages of 55-74 lacked basic education.

• In the same way slightly above 61% of Muslims and about 30% of Non-Muslims between the ages of 35-54 lacked basic education.

• Furthermore, 57% of Muslims and 24% of Non-Muslims ages 25-34 lacked basic education
HISTORICIZING ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES’ LOW PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

• Colonial Marginality Strategy:
  
  • Deliberate strategy by colonial governments to keep Muslim Youth uneducated
  
  • Western/Christian Philanthropy focused on education that furthered the Western/Christian agenda
    • Western philanthropy became an institutionalized structure for marginalizing Muslim communities
  
  • Colonial governments created Islamic communities as a new special configuration to support the European forms of hierarchies
HISTORICIZING ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES’ LOW PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

- The victim-Actor Positionality of Islamic communities

- Resistance to Christian religion and European social structures and services including schools
  - These forms had the goal to undermine Islamic faith

- Islamic communities’ resistance to Christian mission education was part of the broader resistance to European culture and values

- Islamic communities’ resistance to colonial education was part of the broader attempt to resist colonial social arrangements, governance and colonial economic forms
THE RURAL GHANAIAN CASE
RESISTANCE TO EDUCATION IN THE ZONGO COMMUNITY

• Church-State and Education
  • The community saw the School as an arm of the church and state to reconfigure Islamic Values and Ideology
  • The Islamic Community resisted Roman Mission education

• Effects of the resistance to Western forms of education
RESISTANCE TO EDUCATION IN THE ZONGO COMMUNITY

• “The Roman Catholic missionaries and personnel of United African Company and some indigenous community members who were then serving as teachers in the school came to the Zongo community and wanted forced all children to enroll in the Roman Catholic school. They moved from house to house looking for children. Once they came across a child, they compelled the parents to take the children to school. But our parents vehemently opposed the Missionaries and colonial people. When they came to my house, my father argued with them and resisted and they threatened to take him to prison if he did not abide by their dictates”

  (Ibrahim Mahama, personal interview June 4, 2017).
RESISTANCE TO EDUCATION IN THE ZONGO COMMUNITY

• “There were three local community members worked alongside the Roman Catholic missions and the colonial authorities to forcibly take children and enroll them in school. I was not interested in going to the Christian school therefore I decided to use a strategy to get off the hook. I used to set traps in the bush to catch rat and therefore anytime my trap caught a rat in, I smoked it and kept a portion for the local member working with the White people forcibly take the Zongo children to school. Once the person showed up I gave him the meat and he let me off...basically I bribed those local community people who worked with the White people so I did not have to attend school”

  (Ibrahim Salisu, personal conversation June 4, 2017).
GULF STATE PHILANTHROPY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS’ ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION

- Establishment of Islamic Public Education in 1980 through community members’ initiatives
- Generous support of Gulf Philanthropy
  - Provision of resources
  - Provision of financial support for school infrastructure and furniture
  - Programs to shore up girls’ education—feeding programs
  - Establishment of additional funds to support girls’ transition to secondary school
GULF STATE PHILANTHROPY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS’ ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION

- Capability Approach.
- Community members initiated the educational initiative
- Based on mutual support and respect
- Community members served as the school management committee
- No restriction was placed on children’s religion
- The Zongo community now views itself as a stable community that needed to promote integrated development
CONCLUSION

• As nations in SSA push for EFA philanthropic involvement will be crucial for meeting EFA, MDGs and SDGs.

• The nature and framework of Philanthropy should be horizontal and empower communities to lead the way

• Philanthropic initiatives in SSA should focus on promoting human capacity

• The potential benefits of Gulf State Philanthropic initiatives:
  • The region’s deeply rooted cultural and religious traditions of giving to education provide a strong foundation for further engagement

• Arab ODA for education is significant and is growing in absolute terms

• The growth of the education market and the increase in corporate philanthropy in the Arab world are drawing the private sector to think pragmatically about education

• For Islamic communities in the sub-region, such initiatives will create less suspicion