

NGO Educational Developments and Neo-liberalism in Africa: the case of Zambia

By Dr. Peggy Mwanza

Outline

- What is Neo-liberalism?
- Introduction of Neo-liberalism in Zambia
- Effects of SAP
- NGO Educational Provision
- Voices of NGOs

What is Neo-liberalism?

- Fairclough (2003) draws our attention to Bourdieu (1998) who described neo-liberalism as a political project for facilitating the re-structuring and re-scaling of social relations in accordance with the demands of an unrestrained global capitalism.
- This implies that neo-liberalism is a political ideology that requires a strong state to facilitate the reforming of the economy and restructuring of social relations for profit maximisation in a free market economy.

What is Neo-liberalism (Cont'd)

- The neo-liberal agenda is now dominant in development discourse and action.
- Over ten years ago Cammack pointed out that 'the new development orthodoxy' favours a set of prescriptions for developing and developed economies alike. He argues further that the new development paradigm represents an overturning of the welfare statist / social democratic development orthodoxies of the 1960s and indeed of the institutionalised socialist version of the state-led development, it may be considered as the re-emergence of a type of capitalism (Cammack, 2002).

What is Neo-liberalism (Cont'd)

- This kind of capitalism puts emphasis on neo-liberal economics and liberal democracy. The associated economic and social policies of neo-liberalism became central to the state's role in America under Ronald Reagan in the late 1970s, in the UK under Margaret Thatcher in the 1970s, and in New Zealand under the influence of Roger Douglas, the finance minister of the Fourth Labour Government, in the 1980s (Olssen , 1996:338).

What is Neo-liberalism(Cont'd)

- The main prescriptions of neo-liberalism include 'an emphasis on market principles and production of profits; a minimalist role for the state; deregulated labor market; and flexible forms of governance' (Rizvi *et al*, 2005:12). These main principles of neo-liberalism are also highlighted by such terms such as the 'Washington Consensus'. The term, Washington Consensus, refers to the preferred policy prescriptions of the world's developed nations and mainly Washington-based agencies such as the World Bank and IMF during the 1980s and 1990s. These preferred policy precepts included the policy of fiscal disciplining, new public spending priorities, financial liberalisation, trade liberalisation, increased foreign direct investment, knowledge economy, decentralisation, and public-private partnerships (Williamson, 1993).

What is Neo-liberalism(Cont'd)

- Hill (2003) and (Kumar and Hill, 2009) also draw our attention to the requirements of the current globally neo-liberalism within national states which include: the provision of a market in goods and services- including private sector involvement in welfare, social, educational and other state services; and the restructuring of the management of the welfare state on the basis of a corporate managerialist model imported from the world of business. Also, the needs of the economy dictating the principal aims of the school education, the world of business as well is to supply a model of how it is provided and managed (Hill, 2003; Hill and Kumar, 2009).

Introduction of Neo-liberalism in Zambia

- The 1980s and early 1990s saw a wave of neo-liberalism breaking across countries in the developing world (Hanson and Hentz, 1999:479).
- Economic decline in Zambia, as elsewhere in other parts of Africa compelled national governments to borrow heavily from international banks such as the World Bank and the IMF which resulted in many governments in Africa to embrace market oriented policies due to conditionalities attached to loans.

Neo-liberalism in Zambia

- Sharp economic decline was experienced in many parts of Africa in the 1970s and 1980s (Thompson, 1997). For example, in Zambia the crisis in the economy occurred from the mid-1970s and was caused by declining copper prices on the international market coupled with a rise in world oil prices (Kelly, 1991; Lungwangwa, 1999).
- The economy of Zambia was adversely affected as it depended on copper as its major export and main foreign earner. GRZ-UNDP (1996) explains that as early as the 1970s, when copper prices fell, the Government of Zambia sought assistance from the IMF to rectify imbalances in the balance of payments. By the mid-1980s, Zambia was borrowing heavily and falling deeper into external debt such that total debt stock grew from US \$ 3.25 billion in 1980, to US \$ 4.05 billion in 1985, to US \$ 7.2 billion in 1990 (Henriot, 1997:41).

Neo-liberalism in Zambia

- However, unable to meet debt servicing requirements and with foreign exchange diminishing, the government led by the first Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda agreed to begin economic reforms insisted upon by the World Bank and IMF as conditions for further assistance. Thus in Zambia, the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were first implemented in the early 1980s by the one-party regime of Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (Hanson and Hentz, 1999; Larmer, 2005).

Neo-liberalism in Zambia

- However, the government led by the former President Kenneth Kaunda showed little commitment to the reforms or to compliance with the associated IMF and World Bank conditionalities. This was mainly because the resulting cuts in state funding of health, education, and food fuelled the rising discontent among many Zambians. As a result, the government decided to abandon Structural Adjustment Programme reforms. On 1 May 1987, the former President Kenneth Kaunda and his supporting party, UNIP, abruptly broke with IMF programme as they regarded International Financial Institutions neo-colonial (Hanson and Hentz, 1999:482). The Kaunda regime viewed the IMF/World Bank conditionalities as harsh.

Neo-liberalism in Zambia

- However, SAPs appeared again in Zambia due to changes in political government. The Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) was elected in 1991 after 17 years of a single party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) led by Kenneth Kaunda. The MMD was elected on a platform built on neo-liberal policies (market-oriented policies), which were described as “too aggressive for even the IMF’s tastes” (Hanson and Hentz, 1999:483).

Neo-liberalism in Zambia(Cont'd)

- The MMD Government fully implemented the neo-liberal policies which were market oriented packaged in the Structural Adjustment policies.
- As Larmer (2005:30) points out, 'the MMD Government, led by the former Chairman General of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions Frederick Chiluba (previously a leading critic of IMF-influenced policies), implemented one of the most radical programmes of economic liberalisation in Sub-Saharan Africa'.

Neo-liberalism in Zambia

- These SAP policies included: imposition of user fees for health and education, removing subsidies from basic commodities such as maize meal, imposing a strictly balanced budget, devaluation of the kwacha (Zambia's currency), privatisation of large government corporations (parastatals), reform (down-sizing) of the civil service, and trade liberalisation and reduced price controls.

Neo-liberalism in Zambia

- The implementation of SAPs in Zambia meant that families were now required to pay school fees. It is important to note that while there had always been some payment expected for schooling, it was minimal and therefore affordable even by the very poor. But expenses had arisen sharply in the period 1992 and 1994 (Henriot, 1996). Actually, the steep increase in school fees had happened at the same time that the income earning capacity of many Zambians had been reduced through retrenchments, agricultural sector decline and so forth.

Effects of SAP

- Indeed, SAPs have had devastating effects on the socio-economic development of Zambia. As Mwansa writes: “All in all, the experience of SAP throughout Africa has been disastrous. The magnitude of the human tragedy caused by SAP may not be easily understood to-day” (Mwansa, 1995:67).
- Additionally, Alexander and Mbali (2004:140) point out: “The social consequences of structural adjustment programmes have been evident in Africa for two decades.” Up to this day, the effects of SAPs are still prevalent. SAPs have ensured an increase in the proportion of Zambians living in poverty. 68 percent of the Zambian population fell below the national poverty line in 2004 (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2006:2).

Effects of SAP

- SAPs have negatively impacted on the education sector in Zambia. Like many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Zambia entered the 1990s (the period of the full implementation of SAPs) with a major crisis in its provision of Basic Education due to reduced funding (Ministry of Education, 2007). As result, INGOs and National NGOs in Zambia have increasingly become involved in the provision of education.

Neo-liberalism & Education Policy

- Purpose of education
- Governance of education
- Funding of education

Purpose of Education

What is education for?

Human Capital – Human Interest

Education as:

- A public good
- A private good
- A tool for market gains → social efficiency view

Market efficiency > social equity

Governance of Education

- Changes to national education systems
 - Competition
 - Labor market needs
 - Standards
 - Quality
- New actors, new expectations, new mechanisms
- Examples: GMRs, OECD indicators

Funding for Education



- Focused on primary education
- Minimal provision for secondary, tertiary, vocational education and training
- Cost recuperation in higher education
- Privatization of provision
- Funding conditions
- No overall aid improvement for education

NGO Educational Provision

- However, although INGOs and National NGOs are indeed key partners in the government's attempts to implement education policy in Zambia, there are often countervailing forces at work to limit their efficacy. Such forces are frequently economically – driven.

NGO Educational Provision(Cont'd)

- Indeed, NGOs are operating in a challenging global environment. Ilon (2008) notes that NGOs are often required to act as policy agents of donor organisations; as NGOs increasingly vie for development monies, the international fund-seeking environment becomes more competitive; and this competitive environment has meant competition between NGOs.

NGO Educational Provision(Cont'd)

NGOs' dependence on international aid agencies gives rise to important questions concerning, NGO-State relations, and the ability of NGOs to act independently in pursuing their goals. Edwards and Hulme (1998) note that official funding does the following: (i) encourages NGOs to become providers of social and economic services on a much larger scale thitherto, even though their long-term comparative advantage in this field is doubtful; (ii) compromises the performance of NGOs in other areas of development activity such as institutional development and advocacy; (iii) weakens the legitimacy of NGOs as independent actors in society; and (iv) distorts the accountability of NGOs away from the grassroots and internal constituencies, and overemphasises short-term, quantitative outputs.

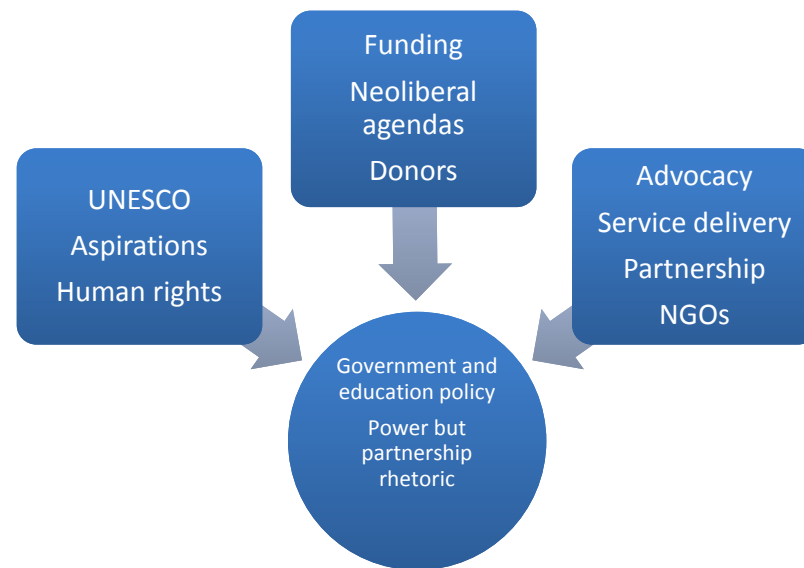
Voices of NGOs

- The research findings by Mwanza (2013) revealed that donor priorities have affected NGO programmes. NGO officers complained that donor funding has conditions attached to it. For example:
- *We follow what donors say. We just have to follow their conditions. We have to follow the contract that we signed with them when receiving the funds. This is a problem! Let's say donors give us 20 million kwacha⁸ to sponsor girls' education and then as an organisation we decide to include a boy, this becomes a problem with the donor. This will not be accepted by the donor (NGO Officer 6, 2011).*

Voices of NGOs

- *As an organisation our work is based on “Activity based budgets”. Therefore, if there is any money remaining after doing a certain activity and we feel we can invest the money in another activity, then we have to ask the donor if we can use the money for that activity but of course, it has to be in line with the objectives of the organisation (CSO Officer 2, 2011)*

The contribution of donors and NGOs to the policy development process in their interactions with the government of Zambia.

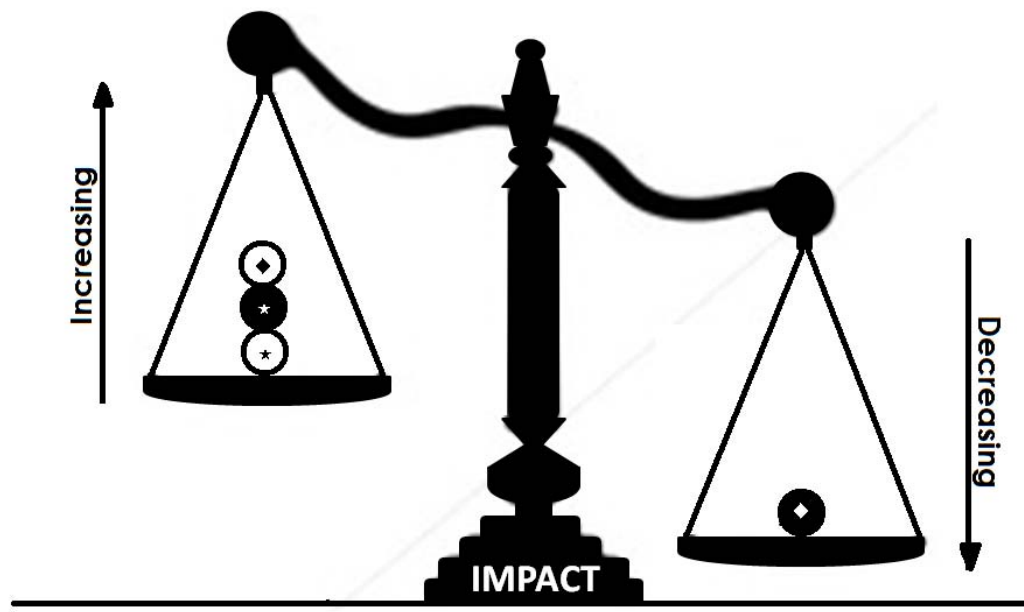


Dependence on Foreign aid

- Dependence on external aid does not work in terms of satisfying the local educational needs of access, equity and quality. As one of the African presidents, Rwandan President Kagame in a September 2007 interview with Time Magazine remarked:

Dependence on Foreign aid (Cont'd)

- Now, the question comes for our donors and partners: having spent so much money, what difference did it make? In the last 50 years, you've spent US \$ 400 billion in aid to Africa. But what is there to show for it? And the donors should ask: what are we doing wrong, or what are the people we are helping doing wrong? Obviously somebody's not getting something right. Otherwise, you'd have something to show for the money. The donors have also made a lot of mistakes. Many times they have assumed they are the ones who know what countries in Africa need. They want to be the ones to choose where to put this money, to be the ones to run it, without any accountability. In other cases, they have simply associated with the wrong people and money gets lost and ends up in people's pockets. We should correct that (Time Magazine, 2007:online).



- KEY
- ◆ = Dependency on donors
 - ◇ = Consultation
 - = Involvement
 - = Implementation

Arigatou gozaimasu

Thank you for listening