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Taking education for all goals in sub-Saharan Africa to task: What's the story so far and what is needed now?

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Abstract

In many sub-Saharan African countries, the endorsement of the 1990 Education for All (EFA) and the 2000 Millennium Development Goals agreements have resulted in the introduction of 'fee-free' education policies in recent time. Yet, in 2015 it is becoming unlikely that education for all will be attained, as it has not been achieved through previous pledges. Using a 'processual analytical approach', this paper examines literature from disparate sources to exemplify challenges faced by countries in the sub-region in their attempt at getting children from disadvantaged communities to enrol in primary education. In the process, the paper contends that 'new' research is needed to examine how political imperatives and democratic processes impinge on implementation of EFA policy initiatives in the sub-region. This endeavour, the paper argues, is necessary to unearth the commitment, progress and constraints of sub-Saharan African governments (as well as commitment of international donor countries and agencies to helping the sub-region) towards meeting the EFA goals.

Keywords

Education for all, millennium development goals, universal primary education, sub-Saharan Africa, low-income countries, policy implementation

Introduction

In many low-income countries, owing chiefly to economic and human rights arguments about education coupled with the participation in and endorsement of the 1990 Education for All (EFA) and the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agreements, the goal of providing all children with a free and universal primary education has received broad national and international support culminating in remarkable changes in their education policy direction. In sub-Saharan Africa as a case in point, endorsement of these laudable social goals by many countries have resulted in governments making pledges and instituting reforms to their educational systems to make them evolve from predominantly 'fee-charging' towards predominantly 'fee-free' status in recent times.

Yet, in 2015 (the year in which the EFA and MDGs are to be met) it is becoming increasingly unlikely that education for all as expounded in both EFA and MDG agreements will be attained, mostly as it has not been achieved through any of the previous, similar pledges. In most, if not all, participating countries, commitments encapsulated in policy documents do not appear to have translated into the needed changes in practice. As cited by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) report (2004), 30% of children in seven countries (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Mali and Niger) never even start school let alone attend regularly. Whilst this could be taken as an indication that the EFA agreement and the MDGs are

not taking hold, the preponderance of available research evidence (e.g. Nudzor, 2012; Somerset, 2009; Tomasevski, 2006; UNESCO, 2008) suggest that Africa is/was the only region where the end of primary education denoted exit from education for the majority of children. To put these challenges into perspective, whereas it has been alleged that Eastern Europe and Latin America were on track towards meeting the EFA and MDG targets, or nearly so, sub Saharan Africa is cited as lagging behind desperately and irreparably (Nudzor, 2012).

So what is responsible for the inability of sub-Saharan African countries to attain EFA status? The preponderance of international and comparative education research evidence (e.g. for Akyeampong, 2009; Mehrotra, 1998; Nudzor, 2012; Tomasevski, 2005, 2006) suggests that in 2015 the one policy strategy that many low-income countries have adopted to accelerate progress towards EFA and MDGs has been the introduction of fee-free primary education. However, what remains conspicuously underdeveloped in the literature is a thorough discussion of how sub-Saharan African countries are faring as far as EFA provision and delivery is concerned, particularly in the face of

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the political and democratic changes currently taking root in the sub-region.

This paper[1] aims to fill this lacuna in the literature. Using a 'processual analytical approach' (Pettigrew, 1997), this paper examines literature from international and comparative education research sources to exemplify challenges faced by countries in sub-Saharan Africa in their attempt at getting children from disadvantaged communities to enrol and complete primary education. The processual analytical approach is useful for analysing phenomena and processes in which social and organizational processes and outcomes are 'transparently observable' (Pettigrew, 1990). In this approach, fundamentally analysis consists of reviewing and summarizing a number of processes and phenomena which are presented in the form of short histories of change events, as well as indicating the observable outcomes of such processes. The approach, although mainly used in narrative reviews of literature in education development research, has also been found useful in studies of organizational processes in sectors such as health (e.g. Pettigrew et al., 2007), and higher education (e.g. Tiplic, 2008), drawing upon documents, interviews, and observations as sources of data.

The paper is based directly on the author's doctoral and post-doctoral research, which used the free compulsory universal basic education (fCUBE) policy implementation in Ghana to deepen knowledge and understanding of the constraints to implementing universal primary education (UPE) policy initiatives particularly in sub-Saharan African countries. For this reason, the methodology for the selection of literature for processual analysis involved two complementary phases. The first focused on the analysis of key literature and policy documents on the fCUBE policy implementation in the context of Ghana. The second complementary phase involved a survey of international and comparative education journals, and purposively selecting from these journals research projects reports and publications on the implementation of EFA policy initiatives in low-income countries. Thus, the methodology of the processual analysis of literature contained in this paper consists of reviews of some relevant literature available on EFA policy initiatives, processes and practices particularly in sub-Saharan African countries and summarizing the observable outcomes that emerge from these analyses.

Essentially, the paper argues that in the face of current democratic and/or political changes sweeping across the face of the sub-region, 'new' research is required urgently to examine the extent to which these changes are leading to continuity or discontinuity in policy and practice, particularly in relation to EFA provision agenda. The paper contends that this endeavour is necessary to, among other things, exemplify the commitment, progress and constraints of sub-Saharan African governments (as well as commitment of international donor countries and agencies to helping the sub-region) towards meeting the EFA goals they have subscribed to in principle and which they are obliged to fulfil.

The next section of the paper exemplifies, mainly through a review of literature, the challenges faced by sub-Saharan African countries in their attempt at getting children from disadvantaged communities to enrol and complete primary education. This is followed by a section which proposes what needs to be done, in terms of 'new' research that needs to be undertaken, under the current political and/or democratic dispensation in the sub-region. Thereafter, the rationale and value for this 'new' research are explored respectively before coming to a conclusion.

Implementing EFA initiatives in low-income countries: what is the story so far?

Until now, the one policy strategy that many low-income countries have adopted to accelerate progress towards EFA and MDGs has been the introduction of fee-free primary education. Between 2000 and 2006 alone, some 14 so-called 'developing countries' formally abolished tuition fees for primary schools as a strategy for accelerating progress towards attaining EFA status (UNESCO, 2008). While this strategy is commendable in the sense that it has led to a reasonable surge in enrolment figures, it is becoming increasingly clear that the biggest challenges faced by low-income countries relate to getting children from disadvantaged and marginalized communities to enrol and complete primary education. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, about a third of primary school age children, the vast majority of them from poor, rural backgrounds and mostly girls, are said to be out of school (Lewin and Akyeampong, 2009; UNESCO, 2008).

A review of existing literature (e.g. Akyeampong, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Lewin and Akyeampong, 2009; Nudzor, 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Somerset, 2009) indicates that the issue of poverty presents a huge challenge to sub-Saharan countries in their quest to make education, especially primary education free, compulsory and universal. Also, compelling research evidence (e.g. Hannum and Buchmann, cited by Akyeampong, 2009: 177; Nudzor, 2007, 2012, 2013a, 2013b) shows that educational expansion policies do not necessarily narrow educational opportunities between the social strata, not even when they are accompanied by reforms designed to modify the allocation of education opportunities within society. What tends to happen rather is that groups with high enough social and economic capital are able to make most of the opportunities educational expansion offers, leaving poorer members of society still at a disadvantage. Again, it is also argued that the benefits of attending school are mainly long-term and accrue principally to the child, and not immediately and directly to parents/guardians who bear the costs (e.g. Akyeampong, 2009; Canagarajah and Coulombe, 1997; Rolleston, 2009). The consequence of this therefore is that where economic resources are a bit constrained, owing to the existence of 'public', 'private', 'indirect' or what Akyeampong (2009: 177) refers to as 'ancillary costs' of funding education (i.e. cost of feeding, school uniforms, transport, etc.), parents/guardians tend to engage their children/wards in economic and/or occupational activities because they do not necessarily see schooling exclusively or primarily as a

worthwhile economic investment (see Awedeba et al., 2003; Canagarajah and Coulombe, 1997; Rolleston, 2009; Ye and Canagarajah, 2002; Rolleston, 2009, for further discussions on the issue of child labour in low-income countries in general).

A number of studies also reveal that compulsory education legislation is not necessarily a panacea for achieving UPE particularly in the absence of collective influence of local authorities and peer groups (Appleton et al., 1996; Little, 2008; Nudzor, 2012). In countries where UPE provision has been made compulsory, studies have shown that without strong local community advocacy and support, such legislation is rendered practically impotent. An example to buttress this point comes from Mehrotra (1998) who cites the case of India, where states which had put in place compulsory education legislation such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan achieved relatively low enrolment ratios as compared to states without this legislation, namely Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Manipur, which achieved high enrolment ratios. Akyeampong (2009: 176) concludes against this backdrop that 'compulsory legislation often provides the legal framework for government action to supply basic education services more widely and equitably, but that action, especially in poor countries, does not necessarily motivate demand'. For him, demand is a function of household cost–benefit analysis and the household's assessment of the opportunity costs.

Evidence in the research literature also suggests that an 'expanded vision of access', which includes physical access, appropriate age in grade progression, consistent attendance, reasonable access to post primary education and appropriate learning outcomes among others, is needed to take account of the changing patterns of access to education in sub-Saharan Africa (Lewin and Akyeampong, 2009). Although it is undeniable that access to education lies at the heart of growth, poverty alleviation and indeed development, the simplistic conceptualization of access to education (most especially in sub-Saharan Africa countries) which measures mainly Gross and Net Enrolment Rates has serious implications for education provision and delivery. Such nominal enrolment figures, as Lewin (2009) for example argues, are unable or fail to capture high attrition rates and low levels of learning outcomes. Crucially, such a restricted definition used to monitor progress masks significant exclusion (i.e. children enrol but learn little), and conceals very unequal patterns of participation related to household income, location, gender and other forms of disadvantage (Akyeampong, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Rolleston, 2009).

Cultural values and stereotyping have also been identified as exerting strong influence on EFA provision. There is compelling evidence in the literature (Appleton et al., 1996; Avotri, 2001; Herz et al., 1991; Yeboah, 1997) to suggest that when affordability becomes an issue and parents feel they have to make a choice of which child to enrol in school, the tendency, in many African countries south of the Sahara has always been to prioritize boys' education over those of girls. This attitude, the research evidence suggests, is based on the traditional stereotyped belief that boys generally generate more investment returns whilst girls are good 'homemakers'. This particularly unmasks the gender gap in schooling in low-income countries. The explanation thus shows that the barriers to girls' enrolment in school have been generally poverty and parental decision-making as common determinants (Akyeampong, 2009; Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah, 2009; Somerset, 2009).

The issue of non-completion of primary school owing to the high drop-out rates is also well-documented in the literature. In countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the issue is said to be most prevalent in rural and poverty stricken areas (Akyeampong, 2009; Rolleston, 2009) where children start school and drop-out rather than not starting at all. A study conducted by Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah (2009) for example explores the complex picture of multiple causes which interact leading to decisions to withdraw from school in northern Ghana, and has identified both demand and supply-side factors of the issue. The findings of this research reaffirm some of the known factors which contribute to school drop-out, which have been reported across a number of countries. Mainly, these factors are associated with child labour, poverty, death of parents, foster-age, poor performance in school, parental lack of interest in formal education, teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, teacher attitudes to children, distance from school, persistent learning difficulties, corporal punishment, poor attendance and repetition. Essentially, this research has shown that more often it is a combination of these factors that creates a more potent force which increases the risk of dropping out, rather than each factor in isolation.

The literature review also shows clearly that in sub-Saharan Africa, the overall enrolment rates of pupils also mask stark disparities. For example, the prospects of children in the poorest quintile never having gone to school are said to be about 10 times greater than those of children in the richest quintile. Similarly, the literature indicates further that if a child lives in a rural area, his or her chances of not having attended school are over three times higher than an urban child (World Bank, 2010). This worrying statistic is further exacerbated in the case of the girl child. The literature suggests that a rural girl from the poorest quintile is 13.9 times more likely to not have attended school than an urban boy from the richest quintile. This trend grows sharper further up the education ladder, culminating in very restricted entry to higher education. Furthermore, it is observed that in cases where gender parity has nearly been achieved at primary level (i.e. where girls enrol at almost the same rates as boys), towards the end of the primary cycle and at higher levels, girls' participation drops off significantly due mainly to poverty and a hostile environment of sexual harassment from male students and even some male teachers.

Also, high teacher absenteeism is identified as one of the key inefficiencies in the education sector of most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The issue, according to the literature, is more common in rural schools, apparently associated with higher occurrences of a poor work environment and poor teacher morale. For example, a survey conducted by the Center for Democratic Development (2008) in

Ghana indicated that the average teacher absentee rate was 27%. This was corroborated by a recent World Bank survey (2010), where unannounced visits to about 300 primary schools in the country found that approximately 28% of teachers were missing from classrooms. Among the main underlying reasons for the high teacher absentee rate are inadequate supervision, sickness/medical care, collection of salary at a bank located at a distance, frequent funeral attendance and long distances to school. The other underlying reasons noted are religious practices (for instance, Friday prayers among Muslim teachers), schools lacking facilities, especially sanitation (toilets and potable water), schools located far from lorry/bus stations and healthcare facilities, and rural teachers supplementing their income by engaging in other income generating activities such as farming and fishing. The issue of low attendance is compounded by the problem of low instructional time in school (i.e. the practice referred to commonly as low teacher time on task). According to the literature, causes such as frequent breaks, slow transition to instruction, time spent disciplining students, and collecting homework all contribute to reducing the amount of time that children are engaged in learning (World Bank, 2010).

In summary, the review in this section raises salient issues regarding problems African countries south of the Sahara face in their attempts to accelerate progress towards meeting EFA goals. Essentially, the review highlights a very salient issue of economics (that is, the opportunity cost of educating children) that not only undermines the provision of adequate resources for education, but also deters parents/guardians from sending their children/wards to school because children are a more valuable economic asset if they help out in economic or occupational activities.

The following section sets out what can be done, in terms of research that can be undertaken, in view of the problems and issues alluded to above, and in the light of the diverse socio-economic, political, cultural, historic, discursive and fragile contexts within EFA policy initiatives that are being implemented in sub-Saharan Africa.

What is needed now?

Sub-Saharan Africa is often cited as one of the richest laboratories for social scientists. It owes this reputation to its socio-economic, cultural and political contexts as well as its extraordinary, subtle diversity of its many component states and societies (Tomasevski, 2006; UNESCO, 2004, 2008; World Bank, 2010). As the review of relevant literature above has shown, sub-Saharan Africa governments are faced with some socio-economic and geo-cultural issues and challenges as they make efforts to universalize primary and/or basic education. In recent years, these issues bedevilling the sub-region are being exacerbated further by the wind of political change sweeping across the face of the continent. In some countries (e.g. Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania), this political and its associated electoral processes are somewhat smooth and peaceful whereas in others (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe) these processes are fraught with

controversy and political upheavals and violence. Whilst these issues have been written about widely, there is little credible evidence about their effects on EFA provision agenda in countries of the sub-region.

This paper argues, in the face of this lacuna in the literature, that research is needed to investigate thoroughly how the democratic and/or political changes sweeping across the face of sub-Saharan Africa are leading to continuity or discontinuity in policy and practice of countries in the sub-region. What this paper calls 'new' research, simply refers to critical follow-up research on implementation of EFA policy initiatives which will help generate theoretical and methodological insights to deepen knowledge and understanding of how or the extent to which political imperatives and democratic processes impinge on EFA goals in sub-Saharan African countries. For example, undertaking what is described in the context of this paper as 'new' research using the process, programmatic and political dimensions of policy (Marsh and McConnell, 2010a, 2010b; McConnell, 2010; Nudzor and Ankomah, 2014) as a conceptual heuristic, for instance, has the potential, among other things, to generate theoretical insights into what constitutes policy success. This may help to deepen understanding of how by using these three dimensions of policy the analyst is enabled to see beyond the traditional problem-solving intent, and to view policy equally as a language for framing political discourse and for getting people involved in democratic processes (Nudzor, 2012; Shulock, 1999). In methodological terms, the purpose of the body of 'new' research proposed in this paper may call, among other things, for the use of the kind of research approach Vavrus and Bartlett (2006), for example, refer to as 'vertical case studies' as a means of attending to the diverse multi-cultural contexts, and comparing knowledge claims among actors with different social locations and orientations in a vertically-bounded analysis. The focus of the vertical case studies on on-going EFA policy initiatives (particularly at the community and/or local level) in sub-Saharan African countries may thus facilitate a thorough understanding of the relationship between context and process, and the importance and/or dynamics of local community advocacy and support in strengthening national and cross-national policy initiatives.

Thus, the rationale essentially is that by undertaking the 'new' body of research this paper advocates, an opportunity will be created for investigating and deepening knowledge and understanding of issues relating to the diverse socio-economic, political, cultural, discursive and fragile contexts within which EFA policy initiatives are implemented in sub-Saharan Africa, and how these impact on the policy and practice of countries of the sub-region. Equally, the outcomes of this 'new' research have the potential to deepen knowledge and understanding of stakeholders of education in the sub-region and beyond regarding the contentious issue of what constitutes education policy success and failure.

Why is this 'new' research needed?

The design of education in sub-Saharan Africa undoubtedly went through a cycle of de-privatization during the first

post-independence decade in the 1960s and then a cycle of re-privatizations in the 1990s (Kitaev cited by Tomasevski, 2006). The initial de-privatizations, which were described as 'nationalization' of education, were hugely important for the newly independent countries. It (i.e. education) was mandated by the law and was seen as the key to nation-building through the states' control over schools, curricula and teachers. Free and compulsory education was recognized as a human right and was expected to trigger indigenous development (Dei, 2005; Nwomonoh, 1998; Turner, 1971). However, hopes that education would attain such social goals were short-lived as in the 1980s and 1990s (owing to World Bank and International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programmes) direct charges in public education were imposed, and financial responsibility for education was transferred from governments to families and communities (Akyeampong, 2009: 179–181). A great deal of critique, in recent times, is directed at the conversion of the previously free into 'for-fee' primary education because it inevitably leads to the institutionalization of economic exclusion, and jeopardizes both efforts aimed at universalizing primary education and poverty reduction (Nudzor, 2013a). As of now, there has been little systematic in-house reviews of the impact of the World Bank's support for illegal charging of school fees or what the Bank itself describes as 'levies' or 'user-fees', particularly in the sub-Saharan African region. Any attempt therefore to examine the effects of political and/or democratic imperatives on EFA provision agenda is not only worthy of undertaking but equally significant. Such an attempt (as this paper proposes) will bring back to the fore the debate about education as a human right and an essential tool for national development. This will serve to raise awareness of governments of the sub-region to the role of education in nation-building and will help them to re-orient themselves appropriately towards providing free, compulsory and universal primary education for the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups in their respective countries.

Besides, because education is viewed as a right guaranteed in the United Nations Convention/Declaration on the Rights of the Child, and in other international agreements and conventions (e.g. EFA and MDGs agreements; the Beijing Declaration on Women's Rights; the Lomé Convention), it pertains to the state and is supposed not to be affected by change of governments. Unfortunately however, this obligation of/on the state does not always correspond with political commitments of governments. The MDGs, the EFA and similar outputs of international agreements may often be discarded when governments change. The interesting point worth noting is that a new government is not bound by political commitments of a previous government. Seen in this light, the 'new' research this paper proposes is not only relevant because it purports, among other things, to examine the commitment of successive governments themselves to achieving the outputs of international agreements they have subscribed to and which they are obliged to meeting. Most importantly, this 'new' research will account for progress made by the countries

themselves towards achieving the EFA status to date. This is particularly essential because the endeavour will raise broader management issues about the capacities and constraints on democratically-elected governments to realize their own visions and priorities as opposed to those of their predecessors. Equally, donor countries and international development partners can be put off unless undesirable implementation outcomes can be explained in a rational way and the measures to be taken to address these are properly outlined, as the 'new' research this paper proposes advocates.

Value of the proposed 'new' research

In view of the purposes and/or rationales for the 'new' body of research proposed by this paper, the overall value of the follow-up research into EFA provision agenda rests in its empirical, normative and practical policy contributions to knowledge and understanding of policy implementation issues and processes in sub-Saharan Africa.

Empirical value

Challenging the institutionalized denial of the right to education necessitates highlighting the damage caused by this denial. Essentially, the purpose of the 'new' research that this paper proposes is to, among other things, examine and document whether the right to primary education in sub-Saharan Africa is recognized or denied, to discern why this is so, and to highlight the impact this recognition or denial has had, and is still having, not only on individual countries but the sub-region as a whole. As such, the process needs to focus essentially on examining what governments of the respective countries had said about their willingness and capacity to provide free primary education, and how they sought to engage with this laudable social goal, particularly in this era of political and/or democratic dispensation. Most often, the reasons for their failure to fulfil their pledge to universalize primary education are not thoroughly discussed rather than to attribute this to financial constraints. As if to add insults to injury, information which will trigger such debate and analysis is also, in most cases, unavailable. Seen in this light, the 'new' research proposed by this paper is timely and significant in generating relevant information on the basis of which discussions about EFA provision could begin to take hold.

Normative value

The normative value of the 'new' body of research that this paper advocates could be seen in its socio-economic, geo-political and cultural contributions to understanding policy implementation issues and practices in the sub-Saharan African region. Essentially, the activities of the 'new' research that this paper proposes may help to deepen knowledge and understanding of scholars, researchers, students, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations in countries in the sub-region about the socio-cultural, economic, geo-political and discursive

contexts within which EFA policy initiatives are being implemented, and how these impact on policy and practice of their respective countries, the sub-region and globally. Also, key international and multi-lateral funding agencies and development partners may find the output of this proposed 'new' research rewarding, in the sense that the research activities and processes to be engaged in (i.e. in pursuit of this research agenda) may generate a comprehensive and internationally comparable research report which would serve to inform their donor finance strategies.

Practical policy value

The final output of the follow-up research that this paper proposes will impact on a wide variety of audiences. Theoretically, the insights that this 'new' body of research is likely to generate (that is, as a result of the application of the process, programmatic and political dimensions of policy as a conceptual heuristic, for example) may deepen understanding of stakeholders regarding what constitutes educational policy success and/or failure, particularly in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. In methodological terms, the innovative research approaches (e.g. the vertical case studies) to be employed as part of the general design of the 'new' research that this paper proposes has the potential of facilitating a thorough understanding of the importance and/or dynamics of local community advocacy and support in strengthening national and cross-national policy initiatives.

In terms of governance, the public debate that it will help stimulate, for example, may serve to persuade governments in the sub-region to re-orient themselves appropriately to education policies enacted to improve the living conditions of their citizens. The key outputs of this 'new' research proposed may also alert the governments to the practical and pragmatic steps to be taken to elicit strong local community advocacy and support to strengthen EFA provision agenda in their respective countries in particular, and the sub-region in general.

Overall, the output of this research will also impact on sub-Saharan Africa itself, in the form of its governments, policy-makers and peoples. Essentially, the research will serve to unveil the commitment, in terms of the strides the region is making towards meeting the EFA goal. This, in the view of the paper, will thus compensate, in a small but telling way, for the neglect that the sub-region habitually faces from scholars, social commentators and journalists alike regarding the successes the region has chalked up in recent years in the areas of education provision, poverty alleviation and democratic governance among others.

Concluding thoughts

This paper highlights some of the pertinent challenges confronting sub-Saharan African countries as they strive to meet the EFA agreement they have subscribed to and which they are obliged to fulfil. A reflection on the socio-economic, cultural and discursive issues identified vis-à-vis the political wind of democratic change sweeping across

the face of the continent, currently leads the author to argue for research that should seek to examine how political imperatives and democratic processes impinge on the policy and practice of African countries south of the Sahara.

The paper argues that the value of what the author calls 'new' research is enormous. Essentially, it is believed that the endeavour will raise broader management issues about the capacities and constraints on democratically-elected governments to realize their own visions and priorities as opposed to those of their predecessors. On a much broader level, this 'new' research proposed may generate a comprehensive national and internationally comparable research report which could serve to inform the finance strategies of sub-Saharan African countries, as well as those of their donor counterparts and agencies.

Note

1. This contribution draws on a fully-developed research proposal, for which funding is currently being sought for its execution. The original research proposal is entitled 'Democratic and/or political change and policy (dis)continuity in sub-Saharan Africa: Developing a comprehensive framework for understanding Education for All (EFA) policy success and failure'.

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