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Youth citizenship, national unity and poverty alleviation: East and West African approaches to the education of a new generation

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Abstract: Youth citizenship is now on the international agenda. This paper explores what that concept might mean in the context of two African nations: Kenya and Ghana. Post independence, both countries focused on rethinking the colonial concept of citizenship in line with their political-cultural traditions, providing education for all youth and to encouraging new notions of national citizenship. Programmes for civic education were established that have been reshaped over the last fifty years. These citizenship education programmes display the tension between different political goals of national unity, economic progress and the promotion of human rights, working with diversity, and encouraging collective responsibility and individual development. The aim is to use the education of the citizen to encourage civic engagement although there is evidence that these programmes might not, for a variety of reasons, engage all young people into the nation building project. The paper considers evidence from a wide range of documentary and social scientific sources to open debate about how to encourage young people's citizenship within the project of poverty alleviation.

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AFRICAN YOUTH: THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Somewhere between the years of early childhood and late adolescence, the apprentice citizen is expected to learn the skills and the values which prepare him (sic) for adulthood. Few societies leave the instruction of their youth to chance. Schooling, whether formal and public in the usual sense of the term or informal and confined to the extended family, is as pervasive as it is relevant. (Prewitt 1971, p. xi)

Nation-states construct young people as citizens in a variety of ways. The project of transmitting core values or 'citizen virtues' so as to unite members of a community runs parallel to and can influence the strategies used to transmit different knowledge and skills to different groups of children in preparation for economic life. Some educational systems prioritise national civic values and patriotism, some local cultures and traditions whilst others emphasise human rights, and the promotion of peace and stability through democratic governance. Often in the African context, all these traditions merge together when governments attempt to rework colonial heritages, to address more directly the conditions for national economic restructuring and growth within a global environment, and at the same time called to create a form of civil society that can more easily address social inequalities. Such inequalities both traditional and generated through colonial structures shape regional, rural-urban, ethnic, gender and age divisions. Emergent formal education therefore becomes the main vehicle for the inclusion of all youth in society, irrespective of these divisions and inequalities. It is used to create an inclusive civil society that supplements the legal status of citizenship by embedding a range of new political, economic, social and cultural rights. Much of this task used to fall on families, and other local

institutions such as clans, chiefs but increasingly social change and urban migration reshapes household and family structures. The long term future stability and growth of a nation is then dependent on the success of the educational system on unifying each new generation into a common project and giving them the cognitive and affective skills necessary to flourish and build a secure life.

However, the tension between national, ethnic and economic demands is considerable for African countries which have strong local traditions and generationally organised cultures. Young people have a number of responsibilities and duties in relation to the elders, their extended family and their community. Here the instruction of a formal school system can create a breach in this relationship especially in so far as schooling prioritises individual advancement and achievement. The success of a modern laissez-faire economy which is dependent upon mobile, flexible and skilled workforce can jar with the traditions of collective responsibility, identity and cooperation as opposed to individual economic activity. Whilst educational policies highlight inclusion, human rights and citizenship, the gap between the richer elements and poorest gets greater as education itself is unequally distributed. The education of the citizen therefore is often the privilege of the educated, leaving the poor without access to the knowledge which can help him or her form appropriate relationships with social institutions and make their way in society. If these obstacles to citizenship can be identified, then perhaps we might begin to understand the ways in which intergenerational transmission not just of property or poverty but also of citizenship status works. We can discover the critical role that education plays in shaping the differential experiences of youth—the impact of schooling on those who manage to attend, but also those ‘out of school’ youth who, by definition, are excluded from the state national citizenship project (even if they are included in local civic communities).

For many of those who are poor, the only means of survival is to sustain dependencies within local rural communities; for others, the attraction is to move to cities and towns and trying to find their own means of survival, and if successful, send monies home to help their communities. The tensions between promotion of the market and national cohesiveness within the shades of liberal democracy adopted in African nations such as Kenya and Ghana are complex and have major significance for the alleviation of poverty in developing countries. An analysis of citizenship agendas in these two countries offers an opportunity to reflect how this interface between political and economic agendas affects the education system and its outcomes and in the long run, the implications for poverty alleviation. The more the formal education system is the vehicle for national unity, the greater the marginalisation of those who are not schooled or who never reach secondary education where most effort is normally made to create civic identities and practices.

One of the first tasks in our project on *Youth, Gender and Citizenship* is to establish the parameters of thinking about what constitutes the national goals of the schooling system, how citizenship is constructed and what attempts have already been made to bring young people into active

participatory forms of citizenship. By definition therefore we begin, not with a narrow view of defining education as preparation only for the market place. Poverty alleviation, as the World Bank Report (WDR, 2007) recently recognised cannot be achieved solely upon improving the transitions from schooling to work. The social-cultural, familial and political transitions in citizenship are equally important. Individuals will only find ways out of poverty if they feel that they belong, are valued and that they can make a contribution to society.

There are different ways to develop the capabilities of young people's citizenship and their active levels of engagement and participation in a country (WDR, 2007). Formal schooling is the main way in which the majority of young people are prepared for adulthood—young people as future citizens are entitled to an education. For those who attend school, there is the possibility in a modern economy of 'becoming somebody', a person with the potential to make their own way in the world, even if in the event they are not successful. Not surprisingly strong distinctions are made between the 'educated' and the so-called 'uneducated' in Ghana and Kenya. Those who attend schools learn about the civic culture of a country by experiencing the structure, culture and organisation of the institution. However, the experience may also be contradictory. In some cases, this experience directly transmits the democratic and inclusive values intended by politicians and officials; in other cases, the experience contradicts those values, encouraging a discriminatory, negative view of the social order. Schools – unless closely monitored – are not unambiguously democratic institutions, hence the re-engagement continuously of Ghanaian and Kenyan policy makers with the core values and objectives of the education of young citizens.

A second way in which governments can assist in the inclusion of its 'soon to be' citizens is through the introduction of specialised curriculum subject on citizenship (variously named ethics, social studies or social science, civics/ citizenship education). This subject inevitably is associated with ambitious outcomes such as knowledge of the constitution, law, human rights, models of civic participation and the duties of a patriotic law abiding citizen etc. The aim here is directly to shape citizenship identities—alongside and sometimes counter to existing youth cultural and sub-cultural identities. National identity is critical to the integration of all young people in ethnically diverse and on occasion violent societies, but it has to compete with young people's ethnic, gender, regional and local identities and responsibilities in generational, and community relations. The outcomes of such often small curricular initiatives are rarely assessed and there is no proof that they are successful in reducing social inequality and ensuring social integration. Nevertheless as the expression of national goals and cultures, these curricular initiatives have quite a political story to tell.

The history of trying to establish, deliver and amend the education of young citizens and the education for citizenship is highly relevant. The objective for schooling offers an important indicator of how educational outcomes are defined politically, and establishes a yardstick with which to compare those who have attended schooling and those who never have. We cannot understand the

contemporary outcomes of the formal education system without some reference to this history. Therefore, in this first of a series of YGC working papers, we focus on the stated aims and objectives for education of the governments of first Kenya and then Ghana in approximately fifty years of independence. In both cases, early ambitious social goals were established for a national system of education that would bring together the next generation who would be committed to building a flourishing independent nation out of, and away from, its colonial past. These founding ambitions for mass education system provided a guiding thread through extraordinarily diverse eras of socialist governments, dictatorships, emergent democratic structures of governance to the present day. At the same time both Kenya and Ghana have moved their economies in line with neo-liberal ideals of free markets, privatised sector development, a reduced state, and a modernised workforce and skills. The move away from statism and from traditional economic activities has challenged the infrastructure not just of the government but also of the ability of educational systems to deliver economically employable youth especially at times of major restructuring and high youth unemployment. As this paper shows, what Bratton et al. (1999) call the ‘dual transition’ to democracy and a market based economy in ethnically diverse and economically unequal societies such as Ghana and Kenya is challenging in the extreme. The school system is not only under pressure to expand and adjust its curriculum to new economic demands, but it was also expected to deliver democratic, human rights education and individual academic achievement releasing the entrepreneurial talents of its citizens, whilst, at the same time, not devaluing a country’s national identity and cultural heritage.

The paper is divided into three sections. First we consider contrasting international agendas around educating for citizenship offered by a range of contemporary African social scientists. In the second and third sections we explore, first from a Kenyan and then from a Ghanaian perspective, the task of educating youth to engage with national goals and the strategies developed to achieve these goals. The diverse nature of the ‘civic virtues’ which are encouraged in the young immediately indicate just how much work has gone into establishing the education of its citizens as well as the considerable difficulties which Kenya and Ghana have had in defining their own versions of citizenship, away from the pressures associated with the import of liberal democratic project and the construction of a neo-liberal state in the shape of post welfare European societies. Citizenship goals for education were linked to poverty alleviation often only in an indirect way to notions of national economic prosperity through notions of human rights and ‘progress’ and more recently to the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty alleviation does not of itself become a major citizenship goal in its own right, although latterly citizenship and poverty are more closely connected.

Youthful Africa: A ‘demographic window of opportunity’?

The youth experience of citizenship is formative and has lasting effects on the extent and kind of political participation throughout life. Citizenship affects development outcomes by enhancing the

human and social capital of individual, promoting government accountability for basic service delivery and enhancing the overall climate for investment and private decision-making (WBR 2007, p.161).

Today, as the above quotation indicates, the attention of the World Bank is drawn to the experiences of youth as one of the main means to helping ensure economic development. The reality is that there is a record 1.3 billion youth aged between 12-24 in the world yet some 130 million cannot read or write. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone some 200 million of the population (20%) are aged between 15 and 24.¹ This number will apparently peak in about 20 years. There is a chance now to invest in health, education and labour market skills, and to address the needs of this growing bulge of youth, according to the World Bank report. However this ‘demographic window of opportunity’ within which something can be done to prepare these young people for a globalised economy is closing fast. In a context where there is high illiteracy and HIV/AIDS, the challenge is massive. A high proportion of youth in Sub Saharan countries do not complete primary education, the quality of primary schools restricts their opportunities, the costs of secondary education are unsustainable if expanded to cover the whole population, and its capacity insufficient to meet such a demand. The danger is that without sustained investment in such youth, they could become disaffected, alienated and be tempted by alternative life styles (such as, violence, drug cultures, terrorism). Group based social exclusion of youth is potentially dangerous to the political stability that is required for national economic growth.

In this context, it is important to note the purposes for which the concept of ‘citizenship’ has been introduced into the development debate.² It is noticeable that the World Bank now argues that educating for economic growth, although necessary, is not enough to remove poverty. Markets cannot deliver on their own; they need ‘collective action, public accountability, caring for kin and community environmental stewardship’ (WDR 2007, p. 160). Attention has, therefore, now turned to young people’s experiences of citizenship as ‘crucial for development outcomes’. The argument is that not only governments should recognise the major long term human capital consequences of young people’s experiences but that, as a consequence, young people should now be seen as important stakeholders. Without their active citizenry ‘collective action, public accountability, caring for kin and community, environmental stewardship, the promotion of human dignity, and the creation of shared identity and rights are so much more difficult ...’(WB, 2007, p.160) . The transition into ‘exercising citizenship’ is described as one of five key transitions of youth into adulthood—the others are: learning; beginning to work; taking risks that impact on health; and forming families.

¹ See <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/0,,contentMDK:21997667~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:258644,00.html> Some 60% of the unemployed are youth aged 15-24 .

² Proponents of human rights have consistently argued about the need to establish liberal democratic structures and cultures if economic prosperity and national and individual well being is to be encouraged.

The alternative as the World Bank Report points out is social exclusion, which lowers self-perception and self-esteem. Without these, individuals would be unlikely to exercise ‘client power’ and leadership. Client power is understood as a form of empowerment that enables the consumer of any commodities, including education, to demand that their rights and legitimate interests are taken into account. Young active citizens within a neo-liberal framework can thus also be used to improve market performance and capital growth. For example, young people as stakeholders can protest against officials who are not accountable or inefficient. From this position it is possible to assess each national scenario in terms of the achievement of an extensive and comprehensive form of youth citizenship in which young people feel that they not only have a shared identity, but also that they have rights, responsibilities and a duty to provide some service to society. (World Development Report 2007, Box 7.1, p.161).

From an educational point of view, this new youth agenda highlights the value of a form of citizenship education for all young people and a set of markers with which to assess progress of schools towards the achievement of adult civic rights, responsibilities and duties. They would need to encourage *active* civic engagement—youth should be offered practical training to increase their mobility in the informal sector.³ Schools should also ‘help young people make inroads and gain status in traditional African society, where governance is hierarchical and vested in elders’ (p. 3).⁴ The development of social and human capital of individuals is recognised in this report as essential for private decision making. Thus, schools are encouraged to provide (a) opportunities for youth to learn how to practise and to actualise ‘active citizenship’; (b) they should help develop the capabilities of youth as part of the process of identity formation and recognition of the importance of youth identity by those who count; and (c) make sure that youth are given legally recognised second chances to correct mistakes, taking the wrong direction (e.g. drugs, violence, soldiering).

Key to national development is the interest of youth in politics, the confidence of youth to engage in political realm and help solve community issues (p. 164). Social institutions such as schools can provide a space in which young people living in poverty feel they belong, and give them such confidence. Certainly as we shall later see, this is the view of both Ghanaian and Kenyan governments as they should to create an inclusive national identity and to give young people civic knowledge whether through formal schooling, or informal out of school activities for youth. Unfortunately such civic education courses may not have an effective impact on young people.

Youth are at the centre of a maelstrom of rapid and often destructive social change which distorts young people’s position within traditional gerontocratic communities and can cut them off

³ The World Bank Report (2007) quotes Kenya’s Jua Kali program which enhanced master craftsmen’s access to new technologies and skills, improving training of apprentices.

⁴ The Report refers to civil organisations such as *Kafoolu* in West Africa which gave young people opportunities to participate.

from sources of survival. Youth,⁵ particularly those living in poverty or near the poverty line, are at the centre of a whole range of global and local social transformations. In his introductory remarks on youth in a Special Issue of *Africa Today*, Burgess (2005) argues that young Africans are influenced in diverse ways by a range of competing economic, political and social forces. He lists the following:

- (a) Globalisation, urbanisation, the growth of reflexive individualisation, reflexivity, the impact of global mass media;
- (b) The increase in rural/urban poverty, growing gaps between rich and poor, the movement to cities;
- (c) The cultural heritage and identity of a nation and its calls for patriotism and political allegiance;
- (d) Young people's own reaction to traditional ethnic, patriarchal, gerontocratic and gender cultures. (Burgess, 2005a, p.xxi)

Rather than being the new stakeholders of market-led economies and promoters democratic governance, youth are caught between becoming postmodern Westernised 'vanguards' or violent and disengaged 'vandals' (Abbink and van Kessel, 2005). Social scientists and historians have mapped in various case studies, the destructive effects of globalisation and neo-liberal reform on traditional communities which were shaped by generational structures that gave young people their civic duties and responsibilities. As Mamdani (1996) commented, one should not ignore the duality of citizenship in African societies. Young people held the status of 'subjects' within these ethnically based communities and 'citizens' in relation to the state. The more the latter is emphasised over the former, the less support there is for young people, especially in countries which cannot fund state welfare systems.

In this context, researchers exploring 'youthful Africa in the 21st century'⁶ highlight the 'deagrarianisation' of rural Africa,⁷ which has meant that young people have had to cope with the social disruption of leaving rural communities as they enter adulthood, with little social support or social capital. Urbanisation has led to young migrants and refugees coming to the city, moving into the informal employment sector. Youth can find themselves occupying a 'transient position' within particularly traditional rural settings, and within urbanised political structures of the state (Burgess, 2005a, p. xxi). Paradoxically, the resulting 'autonomy, shiftlessness, individuality and materialism' amongst young people may then be understood not as a contribution to economic growth, but as a

⁵ By focusing on youth, as Burgess (2005a) points out, we are reminded of the significance of familial, generational and communal structures which in the African contexts have been severely disrupted by processes of westernisation and individuation as well as noted by the demographic shifts of migrations to urban centres. These phenomena have tended to influence generational relations in negative ways that problematise forms of authority that can, therefore, of themselves become the focus of youth resistance.

⁶ The Africa Studies Association 46th Annual Conference Boston, in 2003.

⁷ Christopher Barrett, 'Agriculture, food security and rural development'—thematic statement for the Youthful Africa in the 21st Century Conference.

threat to the social stability necessary for economic progress and social cohesion. Because of this, unemployed school leavers and dropouts have been attracted to protest movements, political organisations that are potentially violent, military and nationalist movements and drug cultures. At the same time they are faced with dangerous health scenarios (not least that of HIV/AIDS) in a context where economic reforms have led to a reduction in state activity and welfare support. Finally, we also have to recognised that formal educational institutions modern Western cultures encourage young people to move away from traditional cultural sources and identities, so for example they raise expectations that girls might change their status in the community, within the domestic sphere and gender relations.

Therefore, economic restructuring and political reformations in the postcolonial era have very uneven and often unexpected impacts on different groups of youth. New groups of young citizens emerge whose specific types of poverty, educational paths and sense of political belonging and 'becoming' reflect the tensions between modernisation and traditional community identifications (c.f. Burgess, 2005a). The dilemma for many African countries undergoing rapid change is whether young people can successfully connect to and feel that they belong not just to fluid shifting markets but also to the national definitions of citizenship and citizenship responsibilities. Given the levels of youth poverty, unemployment and disconnection, Abbink argues that, on the whole: 'To be young in Africa [has come] to mean being disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginal in the political and economic sense' (Abbink, 2005, p.7). Rather than holding their future in their own hands, they are relatively powerless citizens.

Whilst there has been progress in some respects—for example, in education, migration and job opportunities in the urban area—the exponential population increase and fierce competition for resources within the contexts of malfunctioning or failing states have led to a relative decline in the well being and social advancement of young people in Africa. They are growing up in conditions of mass unemployment and are facing exclusion, health problems, crisis within the family due to poverty, and the Aids pandemic, and a lack of education and skills. They also are marginalised in national state policies and have a weak legal position. African youths are over-represented in armed rebel or insurgent movements of various kinds as well as in criminal activities (Abbink and Van Kessel, 2005, p. 1)

Young people's lives are often affected by so-called 'faulty modernisation' (Abbink and Kessel, 2005) make the point that that they are not necessarily growing up in relatively well integrated societies, but in 'impoverished and internally divided wholes' (p. 2). They do not have a well defined place in a shifting society. Yet the same time, despite this bleak Hobbesian scenario, it is also important to remember that young people are exceptional in their ability to survive such social change. They are active agents on all fronts, even if their presence is not recognised. They hold to moral expectations about the value of politics, the need to challenge corruption, to deliver what is right and

to their entitlements. In that sense youth people in Africa are engaging in citizenship, even if on occasion this involves working through violent or subversive organisations. In that sense they are both ‘vanguards’ and ‘vandals’ (Abbink and Van Kessel, 2005). Education is seen to be of great value by African youth not least because it is seen as a way out of poverty, into employment, and even emigration. It is a means of social mobility (Abbink and Kessel, 2005, p.7).

From the perspective of youth, there is therefore a strained relationship between economic growth and citizenship not least because the former, in its neo-liberal forms, has created the conditions for their ‘powerlessness’ (O’Brien 1996) and has been responsible, some argue, for the destruction of traditional cultures and *well* being and the generational relations that supported young people. Young people as a result of such reforms cannot establish their own independent households (O’ Brien, 1996, p. 57), with all sorts of consequences for family life, the raising of children, and for law and order. Also since the 1970s, African youth tend to have little in common with their parents—take up several different options whether as victims or heroes, criminals or entrepreneurs, They are only partially educated, have material expectations that they cannot fulfil. As a result, as O’ Brien argues, it is no longer possible to take the process of ‘becoming somebody’ for granted any longer (p. 58). Further the gap between the elite educated and those who cannot go to school or who drop out is becoming that much greater.

It is in this context that we begin our analysis of the problem *of* youth and the problem *for* youth in the countries of Kenya and Ghana, respectively. The educational policies, which intend to foster the inclusion and engagement of all young citizens, are our starting point. At this preliminary stage, we have garnered what we can from documents, speeches, academic research, and evidence from interviews with officials and from other social researchers about the ways in which citizenship is understood in Ghana and Kenya.⁸ The two histories of citizenship and citizenship education in these countries suggest the ways in which the respective political leadership has steered the formal education system to include all students in a nation-building project and, on occasion, address concerns about social inequality, law and order, and on occasion a perception of the growing ‘moral decadence’ of its youth. Interestingly the parallel development of government departments working on youth policy and NGOs initiatives to develop active citizenship amongst youth especially ‘out of school’ youth and the need to find new ways of including all young people, particularly the most disadvantaged in the shaping of future developments.⁹

⁸ This analysis does not include all those historical and contemporary youth programmes aimed at promoting citizenship (see for example, Burgess’ analysis of Youth Pioneers in Zanzibar) or student political movements.

⁹ This is the same kind of faith fostered, on the role of education in preparing the youth for participation in citizenship that is expressed by Prewitt (1971: ix) when he states that:

Passage rites, induction ceremonies, youth societies, and public schools, are among the institutions charged to prepare the youth for adulthood. Instruction is of two general types: (1) there are lessons in the technology and skills of social life—in reading, food gathering techniques, in weapons and fighting, or whatever technical skills are seen as pertinent to social survival. (2) There are lessons in the norms and regulations of social life. The same schooling agencies, which instruct the child in technical

EDUCATING YOUTH FOR CITIZENSHIP IN KENYA

Post-independent Kenya as a sovereign state is a country whose political and social life claims to be founded on democratic principles. Kenya has put in a spirited effort to prepare its youth for a type of citizenship that allows its men and women to live comfortably and serve in some kind of a democratic society. In a democracy, there is often the tension between, on the one hand, individual-oriented values and the social-oriented values and between material and non-material oriented values on the other—values, which are assumed to be appropriate for an ideal citizen. Kenya, like many other countries, uses education as a means of inculcating the democratic attributes of democratic life in its youth.¹⁰

The challenge for the first independent Kenyan government was to guide a country composed of various ethnic groups with different cultures into a new nation. One and a half years after independence, Kenya made a strong attempt to articulate its national philosophy in the form of the *Sessional Paper No.10: African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya* (GoK, 1964). Outlined here were a range of general national goals (general enough to be adaptable to any society): political equality, social justice, human dignity including freedom of conscience, freedom from want, disease and exploitation, equal opportunities and high and growing *per capita* incomes, equitably distributed.

As an emerging new nation, Kenya was at pains to avoid aligning herself directly with, on one hand, Western liberal ideologies or socialist ideologies on the other, preferring to adopt what was referred to as *democratic African socialism* (GoK, 1964, p.2). The two principles underlying democratic African socialism were *political democracy* and *mutual social responsibility*. These two principles were expected to become the pillars of the Kenya national educational system, with only a few modifications from time to time in order to accommodate new realities. However, over the last forty years, what should constitute young Kenyan's civic identities and their rights and responsibilities as citizens have been subject to much debate and government work. Over time, educational policies, curricula and practices have been designed to bring young people within the framework of changing Kenyan civic and social values and reforms of the economy.

African Socialism and Ubuntu: forging a different path

After gaining independence in early 1960s, the Kenyan government immediately started work on establishing an educational system for its youth that reflected the aspirations of the new nation. A commission was set up to survey and evaluate the then existing British colonial education system (which still had many of the racial and religious features associated with colonialism) and to advise the

skills, also teach him the cultural norms and expectations associated with membership of society.

¹⁰ In both the Kenyan Constitution (GoK, 1969, Chapter VI) and Draft Constitution (GoK, 2005, Chapter IV), citizenship is defined in the formal and legalistic sense where basically a person qualifies to become a Kenyan citizen by birth, registration or naturalization

government on appropriate educational reforms. What became known as the Ominde Commission's Report on Education (GoK, 1964) recommended that a re-structured system of education should focus on several broad objectives such as the fostering of a sense of nationhood, the promotion of national unity, social equality, social obligation and responsibility, and at the same time the removal of divisions based on race, tribe and/or religion. To inculcate these egalitarian social values, the Ominde Commission suggested several strategies that included encouraging primary school teachers to be creative and progressive by encouraging their pupils to think and act like Kenyans—that is, construct Kenyan identities. Other unifying recommendations involved teaching all young Kenyans in a common language (such as English) and the suggestion that students from different geographical and cultural backgrounds would be brought together in national boarding schools so as to learn under one roof (GoK, 1964, p.28-29). By accepting and implementing these recommendations, the formal education system was charged with the responsibility of developing the entitlement of all Kenyan youth to schooling and citizenship identities that overrode ethnic and social divisions.

Providing young people with a suitable form of citizen education guided many reforms in later decades. In the 1970s, for example, only a decade after the Ominde Report on Education, the government again reviewed the education system through the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP). NCEOP was established under the chairmanship of Peter Gachathi, then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education (GoK, 1976). The Committee's brief was to focus on two key issues. The first related to the realization that educational provision was becoming very expensive for the government yet young people coming out from the education system were not obtaining gainful employment—even though education was generally perceived as the best guarantee for both personal as well as social advancement. Secondly, there was a perceived societal need to redefine Kenyan social and ethical values not least because public condemnation of social problems such as 'corruption, nepotism, tribalism and idleness...' were seen to be ineffective. These were maladies usually associated with lack of the necessary supporting moral and civics education (GoK, 1976, p.7-8). Faith in the importance of educating youth, as a means of economic and social development, remained strong despite the rather high levels of poverty (GoK, 2003) and such perceived moral decadence. One of the basic assumptions was that the government had the obligation to continue using education for the promotion of national unity, to eradicate social, economic and regional inequalities, in order to develop those being educated into useful citizens, capable of, and motivated towards the improvement of the nation as a whole. Arguably such moral approaches would also help economic growth as well as individual development. The Gachathi Report (GoK, 1976, p. 7) offered the following argument: A business that has no in-built financial control cannot survive in the long run. But financial control is a human activity based on the knowledge, skills and moral education of the individual involved. Thus, without any kind of moral belief and education, the individual may just be happy to manipulate the financial figures for selfish reasons, and to the detriment of the business concern (GoK, 1976: Ibid).

Another way of dealing with the anti-social behaviour was developing at the time amongst Kenyan youth¹¹ was to introduce into formal education a new separate school subject *Social Education and Ethics*.¹² The justification for the teaching of ethics is captured well in the following statement: ‘...lack of ethical foundations will constitute a basis for social disintegration and in the long run, degeneration of quality of life of society and eventual social death (GoK, 1976, p.7). Social Education and Ethics (SEE) was established as a secondary school subject within the new 8-4-4 system of education, introduced in 1986. Unfortunately the new subject was optional. Further, it never became part of the curriculum at the higher education level. This is perhaps one of the indications that, the institutions of higher learning have never been serious champions for the inculcation of non-economic values likely to promote citizenship in the youth.

A shift in emphasis by the late 1980s placed this education in social ethics alongside new economic emphases on self-reliance and self-employment (a shift that again reflected the growing unemployment of youth). In 1988, a new general review of Kenyan educational philosophy, policies and objectives was set up to consider whether these were in line with the changing socio-cultural, economic and political demands of the country. A Presidential Working Party under the Chairmanship of James M. Kamunge¹³ was established to look into *Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond* (GoK, 1988). This review recommended that the concepts and practices of co-operative effort and mutual social responsibility offered in *Social Education and Ethics* in secondary schools, be taught and developed in all levels of education and training (GoK, 1988).

The inculcation of values of citizenship and the development of young Kenyans’ capabilities as citizens reflected the tension between collective social responsibility and individual achievement and responsibilities—themes that were reworked in the late 1990s. In preparation for the 21st Century and the 3rd Millennium, the Government appointed a Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya that was chaired by David Koech (GoK, 1999a). The task was to review Kenya’s educational system and recommend ways and means of enabling the government to facilitate the link between national unity, mutual social responsibility, accelerated industrial and technological development, and consolidation and enhancement of life-long learning (GoK, 1999a: xix).

The Koech Commission underscored the need for Kenya to produce, through the education system, a new type of citizenry that would have the following characteristics: a sense of patriotism and nationalism that transcends ethnic and traditional ties, integrity of character, and a vision to uphold the

¹¹ The recommendation to introduce *Social Education and Ethics* in the education system was not implemented until 1986 when it became part of Secondary Education.

¹² Five years after the Gachathi report, another commission was appointed under the chairmanship of C.B. Mackay, a Canadian educationalist. The Mackay Report (GoK 1981) argued for the contribution that education could make to economic development, but at the same time it should contribute to the promotion of social justice and inculcate social ethics in youth. Despite the fact that the core mandate the Mackay Report was to investigate the possibility of launching a second public university, its recommendations reiterated the importance of the general education objectives identified in the earlier education commission documents.

¹³ The then Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

rule of law (GoK, 1999a, p. 17). It emphasised communal *civic virtues* which individuals share, such as moral virtues of honesty, confidence, work ethics and concern for others' welfare. It also identified several specific school subjects such as Social Education and Ethics, Religious Education, Literature, and History and Government, all of which have the potential to inculcate these values in youth and all of which were already established in the school curriculum.¹⁴

Educating youth for citizenship in secondary schools

The development of Social Education and Ethics (SEE) had a strong egalitarian thrust even though it was placed in secondary schools as an optional subject along with religious and business education. Compared with the latter, SEE was perceived by many parents as being relatively less valuable (See KIE, 1999) and hence, most schools lobbied to have it expunged from the curriculum as a way of trimming the number of subjects being offered in secondary school.

The Mackay report emphasised that a national education system should always aim to remove social injustice and disparities between sexes, geographical regions and social and economic groups in a community (GoK, 1988, p.10). Secondary Education forms the third cycle of education in Kenya, after Pre-Primary and Primary Education. In reality Secondary Education is the second cycle since Pre-Primary Education has yet to be fully embraced by the Government as part of public education system. African societies recognize this stage and attach a lot of importance to it as the period when the youth are prepared for the responsibilities of becoming adults (GoK, 1988). In practice, there has been a tendency to stress what is expected of the youth in terms of academic performance and patriotism over their entitlement to relevant education commensurate to behavioural change that reflects nationhood and belonging. This notwithstanding, the general objectives of the four year Secondary Education for the mostly 14-17 year cohorts as formulated by the Presidential Working Party in the late 1980s are to:

- provide for an all round mental, moral and spiritual development;
- provide relevant skills towards positive contribution to the development of society;

¹⁴ While the cultivation of social values in support of citizenship is readily acknowledged in Kenyan primary and secondary schools, this is not obviously the case at post-secondary institutions. A Task Force on Higher Education and Society was set up and convened jointly by the World Bank and UNESCO. The Task Force explored the future role of higher education in the developing world In the Task Force's Report *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*, ((International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, 2000). Several issues relating to citizenship were addressed. In the chapter on "Higher Education and Public Interest", for example, there is a section on 'Higher Education and Democratic Values'. Here the Report argues that a society that wishes to build or maintain a pluralistic and accountable democracy needs higher education for at least two reasons; first, creating a forum where people attempt to understand the form of governance or political democracy that is suitable for particular societies. This could be done by use of debates and research projects on social issues. Second, higher education could help in promoting enlightened citizens by inculcating in them norms and attitudes that are crucial to democratic life in, and when out of school. Thus, while higher education is important for economic development, it was argued that it also had the potential to yield non-economic benefits that were crucial for a democratic life. This called for the restoration of the humanities and social sciences on the curricula of institutions of higher learning, (ibid., p. 44). The Task Force underlined the same sentiments; that general education can promote responsible citizenship through the development of ethical behaviour (World Bank 2000: 88).

- ensure balanced development in cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (manipulative and practical) and affective (attitude and value) skills;
- lay a firm foundation for further education, training and work; and,
- lead to the acquisition of positive attitudes and values towards the well-being of society (GoK, 1988, p.27).

To address the above objectives, the following subjects* were offered to the students:

Table 1: The Secondary School Curriculum

<i>(A) Compulsory Subjects</i>	<i>(B) Applied Subjects—to choose one</i>	<i>(C) Artistic and Other Subjects—to choose one</i>
*English	Woodwork	Music
*Kiswahili	Power Mechanics	Art and Design
Mathematics	Electricity	Business Education
Biological Sciences	Building Construction	Foreign Languages
Physical Sciences	Drawing and Design	*(D) Social Education and Ethics
*Geography	Home Science	(E) Physical Education
*History and Government		
*Religious Education		
Agriculture		

Source: GoK (1988)

*School subjects that are supposed to be ‘carriers’ of social values relevant to young people’s civic education. Each student offered 13 subjects in Form 1 and 2. In Form 3 and 4 each student was to take examination in 10 subjects, which would include Mathematics, English, Kiswahili, 2 Sciences, Geography, and History and Government.

While most of the subjects offered in Secondary School Education could be assumed to contribute to developing youth citizenship in one way or other, it is those subjects that are indicated with an asterisk which are expected to play a relatively larger role. Depending on how they are presented, these subjects have the potential to assist individuals to develop the norms and values that would guide them to become members of the collective (Prewitt, 1971, p. vii).

*

Of key concern here is the devaluation of Social Education and Ethics, which was no longer compulsory in Form 1 and 2, and the making of Religious Education and Social Education and Ethics optional among 10 Subjects in which only one Subject was to be taken in Forms 3 and 4. The other options within this group were; Geography, History and Government, Fasihi kwa Kiswahili, Literature in English Foreign languages and Sign Language. A student could decide to take none of these Subjects for the KCSE. Finally, Geography and History and Government, Subjects that were perennially at the core of Secondary School Curriculum and which provided basis for citizenship education became options¹⁵. The reason for this decision was that a Needs Assessment Survey Report on the Secondary Education Curriculum of 1999,¹⁶ recommended that Social Education and Ethics be dropped from the Secondary School Curriculum and instead be taught through other subjects identified as ‘carrier subjects’. This recommendation drew upon the survey findings showing that stakeholders rated the subject¹⁷ as the ‘least useful’ (KIE, 1999: 40).¹⁸ In 2003, the subject was finally dropped from the curriculum.¹⁹ While the Needs Assessment Team rated SEE as the ‘least useful’ probably based on the perception of its low potential in accessing youth to the labour market, it is arguable that SEE has relatively greater potential in terms of the ethics needed for greater social cohesion and the harnessing the growth of a young economy that is free of economic and political corruption but strong on social responsibility.

It is important to note that besides the use of formal classroom teaching of social values, there are other activities, which are expected to assist youth with social bonding while at school. The activities include sports meetings, District, Provincial and National Music Drama festivals. Further, the observance and recognition of national Days such as *Jamhuri* (Independence) Day and *Kenyatta* Day (representing Hero’s Day), the national Anthem and the National Flag are all supposed to inject national cohesiveness in the youth as members of a Kenyan community. In this regard, flag hoisting, reciting the Loyalty Pledge to the State and the singing of the National Anthem have been religiously carried out every Mondays and Fridays in all the schools (GoK, 1999). Finally, the use of English (as

¹⁵ The Secondary School Curriculum had few changes between the Kamunge Report (GoK, 1988) and Koech Report (GoK, 1999), key of which were: 1) addition of Computer Studies and, 2) the reduction of the number of each student had to take in the KCSE from 10 to 8. Among other notable changes in the Koech Report that are relevant to this paper, were the separation of the English paper into English Language and Literature in English, and Kiswahili into *Lugha ya Kiswahili* and *Fasihi kwa Kiswahili*.

¹⁶ Kenya Institute of Education (a government agency in charge of Basic Education Curricula)

¹⁷ Presumably, most of the stakeholders in this reference may have constructed the value of school subjects in the context of economic outcomes *per se*, a perception which these the authors of this paper have challenged. Without well-defined values and ethical foundations, humanity tends to lose its sense of community as it pursues the dimension of material wealth.

¹⁸ In the same Report, the following 9 Subjects were rated as the most relevant in terms of meeting the needs of both the learners and the society at large. These are: English Language, Mathematics, Kiswahili, Biology, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, History and Government, and Religious Education (KIE, 1999: x).

¹⁹ It is important to note that, although students recommended the dropping of Religious Education from the Secondary School Curriculum, the subject was retained due to the support given by the parents who participated in the KIE survey.

medium of instruction) and Kiswahili as common languages as opposed to the vernacular languages is supposed to enhance social integration among students from various cultural groups.

Promoting Education for All

In recent years, the emphasis has shifted away from the curriculum towards promoting ‘education for all’. The Kenyan government has made considerable efforts to deliver to its young citizens their rights to an education. The most recent and apparently most bold of these attempts was in 2003 when Free Primary Education (FPE) was re-introduced. The FPE raised enrolment rates from 5,874,776 in year 2002 to 6,906,355 in 2003, an increase of some 17.6%. This increase affected both boys and girls although the increase in girls’ enrolment in primary education was 16%, which was three percentage points lower than that of the boys at 19% (MoE, 2008). The Gender Enrolment Rate (GER) in 2006 for boys had risen by approximately 5 points, from 27.2 to 32.0 compared to that of girls, which increased by 6.8 points, from 24.2 to 30.0. Nationally the boys GER was higher than that of the girls by nearly two points. However, available gender disaggregated data shows that there were notable regional gender disparities which show that Gender Parity Index (GPI) was lowest in North Eastern Province while Nairobi, Central, Eastern and Nyanza had near gender parity.

Table 2: The Gender Parity Index (GPI) by Province, 2000-2005

Province	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Coast	0.88	0.87	0.91	0.90	0.93	0.98
Central	1.03	1.03	1.05	1.01	1.00	0.99
Eastern	1.04	1.03	1.04	1.00	1.00	0.99
Nairobi	1.16	1.17	1.16	1.14	1.14	1.04
Rift Valley	0.98	0.99	1.00	0.98	0.97	0.97
Western	0.96	0.95	0.96	0.96	0.98	0.95
Nyanza	1.00	0.98	1.01	0.99	0.99	0.99
North Eastern	0.57	0.60	0.72	0.62	0.63	0.71
TOTAL	1.00	1.00	1.02	0.99	1.00	0.99

Source: Statistics Section, MoE, 2008

There was still however a too high percentage of children who would not attend primary school despite being free. In 2008, the Government went further and introduced Free Secondary Education (FSE), which relieved families of tuition fees as well as having to buy teaching and learning materials. However parents and guardians still had to take responsibility for paying for other school related costs, such as boarding, feeding and their children’s school uniform. The FSE policy has in effect made day schools affordable to the majority of households that are relatively poor. The long-term plan is to make secondary education completely free and preferably compulsory as part of basic

education as is the case in other countries such as Japan and the United Kingdom. The tuition fee waiver for secondary education has popular support from parents, guardians, students and communities in general. As a demonstration of its commitment to providing free secondary education, the Government has in retrospect undertaken to write off all debts owed to secondary schools by graduates of previous years whose certificates had been withheld owing to their debts.

The drive to ensure the entitlement of all its citizens to education also led to a major development in Kenyan public universities Year 2001. The government introduced a new policy that encouraged the admission of privately sponsored students to learn alongside the Governments sponsored ones. This relatively new approach to expanding of university education is popularly referred to as Module II, Parallel Programs, and Self Sponsored Programmes (SSPs) among others. All public universities have now adopted this approach which has helped increase access to higher education while at the same time, enabling universities to subsidise government capitation. Public universities enrolled in the scheme in 2000/2001, and by 2004/2005, the seven public universities had 81,491 students, compared with the 10,050 students in private universities—a growth rate of 60.7% at an average rate of 12.6% per annum. The gender patterns described in Table 3 below show a marked improvement in the number of female and male students although there is still considerable gender disparity.

Table 3: Growth in enrolment in public universities by gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
2000/2001	33,445	17,259	50,704
2004/2005	53,394	28,097	81,491
Growth rate 2000/01 to 20004/05	12.4% p.a.	12.9% p.a.	12.6% p.a.

Source MoE 2006 (Education Statistical Booklet) and 2007 (*Economic Survey*)

Evaluating the outcomes

From the policies and practices outlined above, it is legitimate to ask whether there is any evidence that the Kenya government has achieved her social goals regarding youth citizenship. In a word, have these educational initiatives and strategies helped Kenyan youth to develop their potential and to identify themselves as Kenyan citizens? Is there any evidence that the reforms of the access to, the structure and content of the Kenyan educational system which have been designed to be inclusive, have succeeded in uniting youth in the nation-building project?

What has been demonstrated so far is the fact that Kenya government has tried to design an educational system for all its citizens. It has worked to reshape the colonial legacies of hierarchy and inequality, to redistribute education to all, to provide a common curriculum that included the teaching of civic values and national ethics. Since independence, only a few minor changes have been made to

the structure of the schooling system. In general, curriculum planning has emphasised the development of two types of abilities and values, which were to be promoted. Firstly, schooling should develop young people's skills that would allow them to satisfy their basic needs as they graduate into adulthood, especially the ability to provide food, health and shelter for themselves. The spill-over benefits from such individual activities were expected to bring about national economic development. As King put in a policy review:

Our assumptions, throughout this review of Kenya's policy literature, has been either that there is, or that policy makers would like there to be, a close relationship between education and training, on one hand, and national development, employment, industrialisation, or agricultural and entrepreneurship development, on the other. (King, 2006, p.47).

What is not clear is whether the education encouraged the sort of learning that could help youth develop skills and vocational and entrepreneurial values that would enable them to become economically independent, consequently reduce their own poverty making them feel they have a reasonably equal share in the resources of their country.²⁰

The second general objective of Kenyan schooling is to help develop abilities and values that would allow all young people become proud and useful members of the society—that is, citizens. As we have seen, several school subjects were identified as having the potential to inculcate these important abilities and values in the youth. School subjects in the general areas of humanities and social sciences such as History and Government, Geography Religious Education, English Language, Literature in English, *Lugha ya Kiswahili* (Kiswahili Language), *Fasihi kwa Kiswahili* (Literature in Kiswahili Language) and Social Education and Ethics were identified as vehicles to champion the development of the norms and values that are essential for Kenyan youth.

Although policy makers trusted the formal school curriculum to inculcate appropriate values to young people, some doubts have appeared as to their efficacy. For instance, in reference to the teaching of Social Education and Ethics, the Gachathi Committee expressed concern that some schools tended to over-emphasise the cognitive aspect of education at the expense of the affective and practical aspects, which relate to the development of desirable character and values (GoK, 1988, p.14). A related weakness is the tendency for the school system to put too much emphasis on the passing of examinations at the expense of acquiring skills, knowledge, attitudes and expertise that are necessary for national development (KIE, 1999, p. 24). Research also seems to suggest that civic education has a weak effect on school age children—perhaps because it is not examined nationally. A case in point: An out of school civic education project in Zambia changed the knowledge dimension of the participants rather than their behaviour (World Development Report 2007, p. 174). Knowledge that is

²⁰ Household surveys carried out in Rwanda (Household Living Conditions Survey of 2001 and Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire of 2003) where it was shown that of the data collected, 51% of the households where the head of the household had some education were still economically poor and that 38.2% of those classified as illiterate were 'not poor' (Hayman, 2005, p. 39).

devoid of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ seems to have had little impact on young people’s active citizenship. It is unclear whether those charged with designing the curriculum for citizenship are themselves well equipped with the cognitive, attitudinal and practical knowledge about citizenship. It is one thing to ‘talk about’ citizenship or urge people to act as true citizens and quite another thing to role model for young people how exactly they can practise true citizenship whereby they enjoy their rights and execute their responsibilities as Kenyans.

On another front, Kenya declared that, as a young nation, it was to be guided by a shade of democracy referred to as Democratic African Socialism. Democratic African Socialism is based on African traditions where in terms of governance, political democracy and social mutual responsibility are the two underlying principles (GoK 1964, p.3). Political democracy refers to a situation where all members of a society have equal political rights and that no individual or group could be allowed to have undue influence on affairs of the state. The principle of mutual social responsibility can be understood as an extension of the African extended family to a wider community in the sense that each member of the wider community has an obligation to do the best for his/her neighbour. It is within such a Democratic African Socialism framework that Kenyans are supposed to negotiate their individual lifestyles and lives.

For instance in the life of a community, a situation may arise where the rights of an individual conflict with the rights of the larger community. According to the authors of Sessional Paper No. 10, Democratic African Socialism puts a premium on the rights and importance of the community at the expense of the individual (GoK, 1964, p.4). As Mbiti has said, “I am because we are” (Mbiti, 1969). This definition of democracy is rather different from Western liberal democracy where the rights of the individual tend to be emphasised at the expense of the community (Gould, 1988, p.31; McPherson, 1973, p.4). Democratic African Socialism as articulated here is identifiable with *Ubuntu* (a shade) of democracy, which many scholars in African affairs have argued, is an appropriate framework to inform governance in Africa (Kubow, 2007). However, it has also been argued that, while the education system in Kenya is supposed to champion Democratic African Socialism in students, in practice it encourages some sort of liberal democracy where individualism tend to be over-emphasised. This seems to happen because schools tend to emphasise competition amongst students rather than co-operation, especially during examinations. Thus while the Kenya Government claimed to uphold Democratic African Socialism, little attention is paid to this in the implementation of other educational practices within Kenyan contexts.

There are also conceptual issues related to the process of inculcating youth citizenship through the school system. For example, while the educators urge schools to encourage socio-cultural values, there are those who advise these youths who hail from different cultural and racial backgrounds to preserve their cultural heritage. The Kamunge Committee, for example, points out the double-edged nature of culture and states: ‘(...) in the process of change and adaptation, care should be taken to

ensure that only positive aspects of cultural practices are retained or adapted with a view to enriching and developing the national culture' (GoK, 1988, p.6).

Recent research by Kubow (2007) suggests that there are currently considerable tensions between the concept of democracy which is associated with rights, and liberal definitions of freedom (e.g. freedom of speech, movement), and local cultures and indigenous knowledge. In Kubow's study, teachers in Kenya and South Africa²¹ were able to articulate democracy as a value which they believed in but they had difficulties when such values challenged local undemocratic practices particularly those associated with gender. Supporting notions of women's rights and the right of all to equality, the Kenyan teachers in this study repeatedly referred to unequal power relations between men and women in local communities and the lack of women's freedom. They were aware that challenges to local social structures could undermine traditional cultural gender norms. So, for example, teachers had difficulties in encouraging girls to have the courage to ask questions in class in a culture where they are told not to answer back in the home, where they might be forced into early marriage and where serving men was more important than their own education. Teachers also wrestled with the incongruence between the concept of faithfulness and loyalty when confronted with a father with three wives and a brother with two. A small extract of the conversation between the Kenyan teachers from this study illustrates this point:

Qu: What attributes, traits or behaviours should democratic Kenyan citizens have?

Male teacher: Able to depart with cultural practices that can interfere [with democracy] a person who is in a position to shake off cultural practices.

Qu: For example?

Male teacher: You ... have practices where some boys and girls are not taken to school... if educating a girl, you educate the whole country. People uphold man as head of family... [they] might be in a position to guide democracy for children...

Female teacher 1: That is the cultural discussion in Kenyan society [...]

Female teacher 1: Gender disparity ... Some jobs for men [are] not for ladies. While man is just waiting, women are preparing food. Now there is politics in Kenya. If a woman moves into politics, she will be an outcast and others will start to despise her.

Female teacher 1: We would like a balance between the genders.....

Female teacher 2: Add to that, women are belittled. Someone has to teach [the children] that it is good for women to develop because they are not viewed very well.

²¹ Using focus groups with Kenyan teachers in five schools, Kubow asked what characteristics/traits Kenyan citizens need to function in a democratic society.

Female teacher 3: The parent will pay for the boy and leave the girl. Girl child sent home and boy left learning. Priorities given to boys. ... Brother smarter than the girl because the boy is active in his studies.

Female teacher 2: Another problem with women [is that] women see themselves as inferior. Women are mentally strong, but women [are] weak at home. [Women are] shouted at at home. In church, women can't read the Bible in front of people. Women [are considered] inferior. Women need to be told this is the right point [in time] to say something, to speak up. (Kubow, 2007, p. 321)

The lack of local democracy in the community and the home in relation to gender is a strong theme in Kubow's findings. However the study also reveals how teachers try to mediate democratic notions so that it does not, as a totalising narrative devalue local knowledges and customs. They tried to find ways of linking individuals to their communities, cultural values, and ethnic loyalties whilst at the same time challenging what are seen as the more oppressive practices. The result is a difficult agenda around how to create in young people, individual confidence, self-esteem and agency whilst encouraging communality and a sense of community. For the teachers from Kenya and South Africa:

‘...democracy entails balancing individual freedom with respect and continually assessing local and global influences that expand or constrain freedom and agency for each of their society's members’ (Kubow, 2007, p.324).

However, these are not the only difficulties in terms of linking democracy to cultural traditions. There have been attempts to use Religious Education to promote social cohesion among the students. Three different religious doctrines (Christianity, Islam and Hinduism) are taught to different groups of students. These world religions are based on different philosophical principles with different ethical perspectives. How then does the school, comprising teachers of different religious allegiances, tease out what is to be retained and what to be omitted in the various religious doctrines? Different cultural and religious values are embedded in different ethnic groups—an inclusive citizenship implies validation and valuing of these traditions. There is always a danger that youth from a particular ethnic-religious group will find themselves and their cultures marginalised in formal education, a sense of exclusion that carries forward into the economic sphere and leads to social and economic disadvantage. It is important to encourage youth to identify themselves not just with their ethnic communities but with national and global citizenship. This calls for educators to try and find out how an education system could be used effectively to help young people to develop positive multiple identities simultaneously (Ross, 2007).

The structure of governance adopted by the school system and culture of the hidden curriculum has also raised serious concerns about its ability to sustain an inclusive citizenship. As Sifuna (2000) argues, while the Kenyan education system is well-placed to inculcate democratic practices, the authoritarian structures of Kenyan schools tend to encourage non-tolerance and blind

unquestioning in young people which is inconsistent with the principles upon which democracy flourishes. He asserts that increased schooling *per se* is not sufficient in bringing about the required democratic inclination in society. This observation resonates with that of Wamahiu (1999) who witnessed the lack of participation by pupils in school and classroom cultures in the majority of schools in Kenya. Authoritarian pedagogies routinely use threats, verbal abuse and physical punishments, which impact negatively on young people's relationship to democratic citizenship. Research findings from 92 schools suggest that there is a close relationship between democratic school administrative and pedagogical practices and the students' social capabilities (see Wakhulia, 2004). It is recognised that school cultures play a central role in shaping the democratic outlook that young people eventually acquire or do not acquire (ibid). In a study with university student teachers who used their diaries of memories of violence against children in education settings, Chege (2006) found that, right from pre-school education through to university, girls and boys are subjected to persistent undemocratic school practices of emotional and physical abuse. In this kind of school culture, an explicit contradiction exists between lived cultures of non-democratic practices of the school and the ideals of a democratic education system (see also Sifuna, 2000). According to Chege, the girls' memory diaries describe a complex combination of forms of violence in the school that was both sexual and physical and meted out by the teachers and sometimes by their male peers. In comparison, the diaries of the boys portrayed more violence of the physical type from teachers, mainly male teachers. This gendered violence noted in schools was reflected in the students' experiences outside the school—in family and community. Arguably, when the school loses its potential to act as the intervening agent in breaking the cycle of violence, the hope of nurturing a democratic society that is free of all forms of violence dwindles.

As the young population continues to grow in Kenya, education continues to make little observable or tangible impact on the development of citizenship among the 15-29 age groups who may be running out of survival options. This observation is demonstrated empirically by a recent survey by Centre for the Study of Adolescence on the state of the youth in Kenya which found that more than half of all the convicted criminals in the country's jails were young people between 16 and 25 years (Daily Nation Aug. 18, 2007). Another survey carried out by the BBC on ten cities worldwide, and involving more than 3,000 youth in the 15-17 age group found that 81% of the youth living in Nairobi would readily emigrate to other countries if opportunities arose for them to make a better future (ibid). It is not clear that youth are functional citizens who are prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of their country. Instead, the lack of recognition of young people's political agency and opportunities to exercise that agency is forcing them to take up negative social roles, which may include joining gangs that participate in criminal activities such as robbery and political violence. Some people have argued that job or hooliganism behaviour among some of the Kenyan youth may be a justifiable expression of feeling let down and left out of social and political participation. Notably, youth tend to: 'spend half their lives being lectured on the importance of education. They are urged to

break their necks to get good grades. They do so. Then they step out into the world anticipating the employment windfall and finding nothing' (*Daily Nation*, Aug. 20, 2007). The outcomes of the various government reports, commissions and strategies suggest that the direction of young Kenyan's lives in terms of their dreams, aspirations, expectations, hopes, anxieties, fears and concerns is somewhat confused.

Meanwhile, outside school, several new political initiatives have emerged in the last decade which have affected and may continue to affect the lives of young people and their participation in the national and global citizenry. For example, both the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989), to which Kenya is signatory have influenced—and will probably continue to influence—the articulation of government policy on youth matters. The African Charter expresses clearly what children and young people ought to expect of their governments and what responsibilities children have in partnering with their duty bearers—for example, teachers, parents as well as leaders (religious and political) as they explore their psychological and physical space as Kenyans. This development provides a basis for strengthening legislation and developing structures that foreground matters affecting young people and children. This way, issues relating to education, health and health services, disability and special needs, leisure and culture, care and protection from sexual and labour exploitation, discrimination by gender, creed, socio-economic status, regional origin, among others are identified and defined in the context of rights and responsibilities that form the tenets upon which citizenship may be nurtured amongst young people as they transit to adulthood.

In response to global, regional and national concerns regarding the youth, the Consortium on Education of the Marginalized Categories (CEDMAC 2001) has produced an educational handbook on democratic issues and human rights, which young people access freely through the civil society organisations (CSOs) that currently engage young people in a more vibrant form of civic and political education. There appears to be more visibly active youth work which raises pertinent social and political issues. Many of the CSOs address not just the principles of democracy that should govern institutions and life in general, but also the different types of rights to which a Kenyan is entitled. They sensitise youth to local forms of power relations and freedoms and teach them to interrogate concepts of *equality and equity*.

In addition, in 2003 the Kenyan government established for the first time a Ministry for Youth Affairs whose mandate is to address issues affecting young Kenyan especially that of poverty and disillusionment among Kenyan youth who constitute two thirds of the population and who form the majority of the people who are unemployed. The government allocated one billion Kenya Shillings to the Ministry of Youth Affairs to be offered to youth organisations for self-employment activities, in order to ease the pressure to provide scarce so-called 'white collar jobs'.

Increased attention is now also focused on the gendering of citizenship. The aim of this strategy is to conscientize the young people on the added value accrued when women and men are accorded space to participate equally as allies in both the private space of the home and the public worlds of work and politics. The role of gender in acquiring citizenship status has, therefore, become a major concern mainly among women's organisations that included the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA, 1990), the Law Society of Kenya²² and the League of Kenya Women Voters (1992/1997), popularly referred to as the League. Both FIDA and the League have produced documents aimed at educating women on how to pursue their legal and human rights as citizens of Kenya and the world. FIDA (1990) provides a brief analysis of the Kenyan legal structure and system and how this functions for women with regard to issues of marriage, divorce, rights to inheritance, protection from sexual and domestic violence, among other legal concerns.²³ By the early 1990s, the League of Kenya Women Voters (1992/1997) aimed at sensitising Kenya women to the historical and pivotal roles of women in political struggles of the nation, and their role alongside men at the centre of nation building.²⁴ It also addressed issues of gender discrimination singling out the legal system as supportive of laws that denied women the right to property, land, and child custody among other things. Issues of discrimination in the education system, business and agriculture, health provision and politics were a key focus alongside information about how these affected the position of women both in the public and private arena. The FIDA booklets also offer basic education on voting rights and procedures as well as how to encourage and support women's inclusion in mainstream politics. These kinds of 'easy-to-read' civic education documents play a key role in persuading men and women to work together and hence model a gender cohesive citizenship for the youth. By the mid 1990s, the League had pushed the women's political agenda forward to include agitation for constitutional reforms that would embrace women's agendas, and the education of female citizens.

As Otiende and Njoroge (2001) note, academia has not been left behind in addressing issues of how to educate young people for democracy and citizenship. Academics have focused on the process of democratisation, the role of schooling in educating for human rights, education for challenging patriarchy and enhancing democratic principles and the process of democratising universities in the 21st century. Many academics were involved in the drafting of the current (stalled) draft constitution of Kenya. In this proposed constitution, issues on gender, education and human rights are explicitly underscored (see Draft Constitution of Kenya, 2005).²⁵

²² The Law Society of Kenya et.al. (n.d.), published its own booklet which outlines the characteristics of the kind of nation and government that Kenyans should demand.

²³ In a relatively reader-friendly way, it also explains the various laws that operate in Kenya and in which women needed guidance. These include the statutory, customary, Muslim and Hindu laws

²⁴ See the *Women in History Series* by the Women Educational Researchers, 1995.

²⁵ Although still in draft form, the proposed Kenyan Constitution has had direct impact on government policy that requires, for example, that the minimum accepted representation of either gender in any government appointments is one third, while the ideal should be on a fifty-fifty (equal) basis. This policy is already being witnessed not only in public offices but also influencing the private sector.

Many of the young and older Kenyans are now cognizant of the fact that citizenship rights as entitlements are inconsistent with discriminatory practices based on gender, disability, HIV and AIDS status, regional origin, religious affiliation, among others. Local and international organizations that monitor, document and report on human rights abuses and are credited with informing and educating the public in a process that also includes ‘naming and shaming’ alleged abusers. For example, according to a report by the Human Rights Watch (HRW 2005), governments in sub-Saharan Africa stand accused of failing to address the extraordinary barriers to education faced by children who are orphaned or otherwise affected by HIV/AIDS. The HRW observes that, while providing limited support to community efforts that support orphans, governments have failed to address the unique disadvantages faced by AIDS-affected children, with the result that these children are less likely than their peers to enroll, attend, or advance in school. This report, like others of its kind, is based on detailed interviews with children affected by HIV/AIDS and their caregivers in three sub-Saharan African countries—Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda. Their testimonies revolve around a common theme: neglect and abuse within families, in communities, and by schools and governments that have hindered AIDS-affected children’s ability to enrol, remain, or advance in school. This situation questions how children living with such conditions could develop a sense of belonging to their country, community and family as equal citizens. This argument is congruent with other youth related issues such as regional marginalisation of goods and services for communities such as those from northern Kenya, disabled persons, as well as women and girls. The Arid and Semi-Arid (ASAL) districts of Northern Kenya, for example, present an even more disconcerting picture of the highest incidence of poverty in the country whereby the poor account for 80% of the population (GoK, 2002, p. xii). Yet, this is the area where access to education has been historically low compared to other areas of the country (ibid). The inhabitants of this region are often explicit in defining themselves as living outside Kenya, which implies that they do not feel Kenyan despite having a legal Kenyan identity card that makes them legally, Kenyan citizens.

In sum, what is noticeable in the Kenyan narrative is that since independence, both the public and the government strongly believe that economic development is a key to national growth and poverty eradication and that educational outcomes play a key role in this relationship (GoK, 2002; GoK, 1999a and b). However, while the government seems to link education outcomes with both economic and social advancement, the Kenyan education system, in practice, has always tended to over-emphasize the economic development-oriented aspects at the expense of the social development-oriented aspects especially the humanities and particularly education for social values. Although the government realizes that the youth stage is an important milestone for an individual or group to develop a sense of identity as citizens of a particular country. There seems to be considerable anxiety and a sense of feeling excluded from full citizenship amongst Kenyan youth. This is attested to by the recent gruesome anti-social activities perpetrated by youth gangs in and around Nairobi (Daily Nation, May 7, 2007). Even more disturbing is the post-2007 election violence that portrayed many youth

partaking in the destruction of lives and property of fellow Kenyans. This behaviour challenges not just politicians but also educators and educationalists

Despite the commitment by the Kenyan government and the CSOs to promote a Kenyan citizenship through mutual social responsibility as noted in all the documents reviewed above, it is evident that school-based subjects—in and of themselves—be they the social-oriented disciplines such as History, Literature, Social Education and Ethics or Social Studies are not effective, not least because they are not implemented in ways that foster the inculcation of citizenship ideals in the youths so that they can have a sense of being proud members of the Kenyan community. Without such an identity, can young people at the margins of society find a way out of their economic predicament? Further, there is currently a dearth of researched-based documented evidence to support the assumptions that the socially-oriented content as part of our curriculum would yield socially well-adjusted youth.

The teaching of liberal democracy and individual human rights has major implications; but as Nicholas Otieno (2002:20)²⁶ argues: ‘If one is serious about change, one must accept the challenge to be changed’. As Kenyan teachers point out, confidence, self esteem and the promotion of agency are key to the teaching of democracy, as is the need to promote ‘more socially just environments’ (Kubow, p. 318). The rights and responsibilities of individual freedom have to be balanced against the cultural ideas and practice that give individuals meaning. Dependence on others is an essential part of membership of a community, of a social ethos, and a communality. Social responsibility cannot be sacrificed to individual’s desire, needs, and interests if democracy is to be a civilising force (ibid., p. 322). Kanyinga (2002: 47-48)²⁷ argues that in Kenya, ‘Civil society is ... a sphere of freedom—a sphere of constructing and articulating collective relations and interests’.

EDUCATION AND NATION-BUILDING IN GHANA

The approach to youth citizenship and citizenship education in Ghana has considerable similarities with that of Kenya. However, there are also some important differences not the least various Ghanaian governments’ attempts, post-independence, to use citizenship education specifically to move to a culture of human rights and engagement with global change. Here too the government school system is the site chosen to educate young citizens in the values of the newly independent society, in this case through a compulsory curriculum in citizenship education in basic/primary as well as secondary school and through a range of civic education programmes. However, by 2004 new strategies were required which focus directly on youth as a policy issue. The delivery of the Millennium Development Goals especially in relation to poverty reduction is recognised to be dependent on the achievement of greater involvement of young Ghanaians. In the last decade, calls for a more inclusive form of

²⁶ Quoted in Kubow (2007, p. 325)

²⁷ Quoted in Kubow (ibid. p.318)

schooling and more directed programmes around citizenship education suggest that young people are now seen as more rather than less critical to the economic development of Ghana.

In 2006, a fairly high proportion of the Ghanaian population (some 26%) was constituted by the youth who fell within the age range of 15-35 years. The Ghanaian population below the poverty line as of 2005/06 was 28% according to the Ghana Living Standards Survey of 2005/06. About 11.6% of the total population are unemployed of which a large percentage is in the youth category (UNICEF, 2006). The involvement of this age group in the Ghanaian economy is now cause for considerable concern not least since as the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment's (2006) report *Ghana Youth: working to build our future* found a lack of a 'coherent national development policy and comprehensive strategy to deal with the conditions that will facilitate their [young people's] economic empowerment' (p.1). The Report identified a range of educational, political and economic factors which have negatively affected their low economic status and opportunities. These included:

- The introduction of the Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School (JSS and SSS) system of education 'without adequate planning for integration into the trades/vocations and job placements' (p.1).
- 'Education and training have no link to the needs of the important sectors of the economy (i.e. agriculture, commerce and industry, etc)' (ibid).
- The near collapse of the industrial base of Ghana due to ineffective management of the divestiture process which resulted in the closure of many factories without a structural transformation of the economy to generate alternative jobs for people (ibid)

As a result of this report, the Ghanaian government instituted a youth programme aimed at the creation of employment opportunities 'to enable youth to engage themselves productively as well as to prepare for their future security' (ibid p. v). This drive to address the problems of youth relates directly to the agenda surrounding youth citizenship. The focus of this new programme, like that of the World Bank, was to identify youth as stakeholders in a new economy. The argument was that young people needed to participate fully in developmental processes, by obtaining the necessary capacities that ensure the development of their talents. They are defined as 'the future' and 'their welfare is our insurance for a prosperous and secure tomorrow' (ibid p. v).

This recognition of the importance of focusing on youth and their experiences was boosted by the Millennium Development Goals—one ambition apparently servicing the other. As E. K. Edudzie of the Youth Employment Summit (YES) in Ghana²⁸ commented:

The global campaign to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provides the greatest opportunity for meeting the needs of young people in particular, and the entire mankind at large, to create a new world order devoid of poverty and deprivation.

²⁸ There is also YEN (Youth, Employment Network) which is a non-governmental organisation in Ghana promoting youth employment, youth policy and rights in Ghana.

The full participation and empowerment of youth especially at the national and grassroots levels are indispensable for achieving the targets set out in the MDGs.

Youth participation is vital for equitable and sustainable policy and project outcomes, which not only benefits the youths themselves but also the wellbeing of the entire nation. Youth empowerment, through education and consciousness will strengthen relationships between individuals, civic society, NGOs and governments leading to an integrated approach to achieving the MDGs. (Edudzie, 2006, p1) (our emphasis)

As a consequence the governing party (the National Patriotic Party NPP) in 2001 tried to address youth employment. It also set up a range of government commissions to address the education of young people into citizenship through the framework of human rights.²⁹ These two agendas today—one which encourages economic development, and the other which encourages individual human rights appear compatible, yet the ways in which Ghana has developed the capabilities of its youth as citizens and the formation of youth citizenship identities is a far more complex story. Like Kenya, Ghanaian national independence placed schooling reform high on the political agenda and within that, the need to educate young people on how to engage with the national building project. Unfortunately however, whilst the political objectives were strongly defined, it was likely to fail to reach many marginalised young people living in poverty, and to confuse those who managed to attend schools. Below we revisit the history of citizenship education in Ghana, where considerable efforts were made to redefine the rights of young citizens and their social responsibilities through a compulsory curriculum and a new constitution.

The education of the young citizen in Ghana

Kwame Nkrumah as the first President of Ghana following independence in 1957, however, set a new agenda for the country in several speeches in the late 1950's. He articulated his political vision of mass education as a means to nation building, stating that:

The great task before us is education—intensive ideological education both of the masses and of ourselves, to enable us to understand our purpose and our objectives (Nkrumah quoted in Obeng, 1960, p.50).

Nkrumah 'was explicitly committed to utilising the education system for the purpose of instilling a sense of loyalty to Ghana' (Harber, 1989:p. 154), particularly through the use of the Young Pioneer Movement which aimed to 'indoctrinate the youth with the basic dogmas of Nkrumaism and a fuller comprehension of their role in Ghana' (ibid p. 155). According to Quist (2001) Nkrumah was a leading advocate of the 'African personality' which was shaped less by a static past, and more by a complex new interface between Islamic and Euro-Christian influences. The new harmony of these three traditions would take Ghana forward into the postcolonial world (p.305).

²⁹ This agenda encourages a different discourse around rights rather than responsibilities, around entitlements from the state rather than participation and duties as citizens.

Nkrumah's government immediately intervened in the education system by offering Free Universal Basic Education for all children in Ghana—a decisive departure from the previous colonial governments which had focused on providing education for the Ghanaian elite (Antwi, 1992). The Education Act of 1961 made it compulsory for every local authority to 'contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout the primary and middle stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population in its area' (Bening, 1990. p 216). The political culture of the nation as well as its economic, social and political development would, in the long run, also be supported by secondary and tertiary education (ibid).

However, a clear gap emerged between the political strategies of Nkrumah and successive governments which placed more emphasis upon the economic rather than the cultural and civic aspects of national development (Casely-Hayford, 2000). Nkrumah's lofty nationalistic goals faded as Ghana underwent a series of political upheavals. Reform in the education system became the focus of successive governments beginning with Busia in the late 1960's whose new priorities were ones of economic relevance, emphasising the need for education to adjust itself to the local context of the people in order for community and national development to take place (Busia, 1969).³⁰ The next ten years were characterised by political upheaval and instability not least because of the heavy influence of international goals for education. Pryor observed that the education system in Ghana: 'has its roots not in traditional cultural practices but in colonialism. Although it might be seen as developing away from this, rather than moving towards some particular local model, it is adjusting to an increasingly global agenda' (Pryor, 1998, p. 221). Achieving economic growth and middle income status for the country became increasingly an externally defined path shaped by the structural adjustment and 'new growth' strategies of the World Bank and IMF (Watkins, 2000). Educational policy reform programs were tied to the funding and philosophies of international economic institutions with less autonomy given to Ghanaian leaders and policy makers (Casely-Hayford, 2000). This was particularly apparent within the Education sector where programmes to educate young Ghanaians were increasingly designed according to donor expectations and conditionalities (ERNWACA, 1996).

Ghana's education reform agenda was more about moulding the citizen in ways that were conducive to achieving global targets and economic growth.³¹ On the positive side, education became firmly established as one of the main instruments for national development (even though this was rarely articulated by Ghana's own political leadership).³² Resources were refocused on primary and

³⁰ The first report on the structure and content of education was formulated in 1966, the main elements of which re-emerged almost 20 years later, in 1987, under the Educational Reform programme of the J.J. Rawling's Government (Sutherland-Addy, 1997).

³¹ Part of this 'global agenda' was the drive towards Education for All (EFA) in the early 1990's and the successive policy events and programmes to achieve Universal Basic Education.

³² See World Bank, (1995) *Priorities and Strategies for Education: A World Bank Review*. See also King E. et al (1992) *Human Resource Development and Economic Growth: Ghana in the next two decades*.

junior secondary school systems.³³ A more negative assessment was that the educational agenda attempted to convince local citizens to send all their children to school with little or no understanding of the ultimate outcomes the education system might offer. Studies in Ghanaian education in the last two decades of the twentieth century, for example, reveal that rural children were alienated from their local communities and indigenous culture as a result of the limited integration of concepts of cultural identity, and diversity and belonging with the goals of national development (Sefa Dei, 2001; 2005a and b; Sefa Dei and Opini, 2007; Casely-Hayford, 2000).

By 1987 an Education Reform programme initiated a total restructuring of the entire pre-tertiary education system, reducing the number of years of schooling from 17 to 12. Although there were to be fewer years of schooling, the programme focussed on improving access at primary level through infrastructural reform, and making the curriculum more relevant to socio-economic needs (Sutherland Addy, 1997). The governance of schooling was also reshaped by decentralisation with the number of school districts increased, and greater powers given to District Assemblies which were now held responsible for educational provision and infrastructure. District Assemblies became key focal institutions for central government and external agencies involved in policy implementation (National Development Planning Commission, 1995).

Despite such reforms in the name of economic development, social inequality in educational opportunities is still considerable. Agyemang-Mensah (1998) in his study of the impact on the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in Ghana, for example, argued that poverty was the main cause of continuing social inequality amongst youth. Also implicated were many socio-cultural factors such as the belief in adult supremacy, gender discrimination, early girl child marriages, divorce, fostering, polygamy, female genital mutilation (FGM), tribal marks, food taboos, division of labour in the family, belief in the need to discipline children as well as the low value of education in some areas. Controls on young people's freedom of expression and especially the deprivation of girls' equal rights in society, the lack of equal rights to education with boys and the lack of access to good nutrition were also important in shaping such social inequality. Agyemang-Mensah's list also included religious fanaticism which resulted in children not being allowed to attend schools that observed other religious practices and geographical factors such as inaccessibility to social amenities such as clinics, schools, good roads, etc as well as migration.

By 2001, the absence of an effective legal regime that regulates education was recognised to be an issue by the report of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports/Ghana Education Service (MOE/GES, 2001) which suggested that:

- 'Local education authorities should provide alternative education for the out of school children in their areas of authority'
- 'Children shall not be sent out of school for non-payment of levies of whatever nature'

³³ This encouraged a lowering of resource allocation for the senior and tertiary level institutions.

- ‘The state shall ensure that provision is made for pupils who suffer from any disability of mind or body by providing either in school or otherwise, special educational treatment, which is to say education by special methods appropriate for persons suffering from disability’
- ‘School discipline shall be administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity’
- ‘It shall be an offence for any parent or guardian to withdraw a child from school for any purpose whatsoever except for reasons of transfer to another school or for health reasons’
- ‘School heads with the approval of the district education oversight committee of the area shall have the authority to schedule school hours, days and holdings as are comfortable for the pupils having regard to local circumstances’.
- ‘It shall be the duty of every district assembly to provide regular medical examination of pupils in their areas of authority’.
- ‘No proprietor of a private school shall determine and charge fees without first seeking approval for same from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports’.
- ‘No proprietor of a private school shall impose levies on parents for the purpose of infrastructural development or rehabilitation’.
- ‘School management committees should be instituted in all schools and charged with the responsibility of managing the school’ (2001, pp. ix—x).

The basic value of education to life, according to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports/Ghana Education Service (MOE/GES 2001:3) was self-evident. Education was said to be ‘the root of all development’, ‘the crucible for democracy and liberty and is as indispensable to national development as it is to individual development’. Further, the value of basic education was recognised as a ‘precondition for the exercise of human rights’. The employment of many civil and political rights such as freedom of information, expression, assembly and association, the right to vote and to be elected or the right of equal access to public service depends on at least a minimum level of education, including literacy. Similarly,

many economic, social and cultural rights such as the right to choose work, to receive equal pay for equal work, the right to form trade unions, to take part in cultural life, to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and to receive higher education on the basis of capacity can only be exercised in a meaningful way after a minimum level of education has been achieved’ (ibid., p.4).

With respect to young people’s rights to education,³⁴ the Constitution of Ghana stipulated that:

the child has a right to education and the state’s duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, to encourage different forms of secondary education accessible to every child

³⁴ Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989).

and to make higher education accessible to every child and to make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity (Government of Ghana 2003a, p.16).

The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service (MOE/GES, 2001) recognised that education was a necessity for survival in the modern world and that it was the primary responsibility of the government to ensure the realisation of this basic right and the Ghana Education Service, 2004). Indeed the lack of educational opportunities for children was recognised as potentially reinforcing ‘their subjection to various other human rights violations’ (MOE/GES, 2001 p.5). Consequently, children deprived of education are particularly vulnerable to economic exploitation.

Despite decentralisation, the Presidential Commission in 2002 found declining quality of the educational system, an alienation of the citizenry from policy reform and the inequities within the system. The NPP Government under the leadership of President Kuffour, when only a little over a year in power, responded by setting up the Presidential Commission alongside several internal educational reviews to look into the problems of education. Government of Ghana, (2002) which found that the majority of young people within tertiary institutions came from urban elite homes (Addae Mensah, 2000). The education system was not meeting the needs of local communities nor was it meeting the developmental needs of the nation since a large percentage of tertiary-trained professionals every year leaves the country (Oduro, 2008; Casely-Hayford, 2000).³⁵

The causes of such inequalities in educational opportunities are complex. The lack of inclusivity of the Ghanaian education system for young citizens has clearly been a matter of considerable concern to the Ghanaian government. Some of the problems have been attributed to the failure to a large extent of the state to alter the existing education system to reflect new circumstances and social realities (e.g. the problem of curriculum relevance and employment needs of young people) (Sefa Dei, 2005a). The lack of resources and the lack of sufficiently strong state regulation have also affected the delivery of this complex political agenda. Stagnating school enrolments, the lack of textbooks and instructional materials, the inadequacy of teacher training, diminishing educational finances and the lack of efficiency of educational administration and management practices were associated with the failure to deliver quality education to all Ghanaian youth.

The task for the Ghanaian government has been considerable not least because more than fifty years after independence well over 17% of young people in Ghana are not in school. Also evidence on literacy attainment among Ghanaian children continues to indicate that only 20-25% of the school going age population are able to master basic skills of reading and writing in English by Primary 6 (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008). Recent research by Oduro (2008) indicates that some 17% of the 15 to 24 age cohort and 31% of the 25 to 35 age cohort still had never been to school. The literacy rates are much worse for the rural poor children and better for the urban based children (MOESS,

³⁵ Oduro’s work based on Ghana Statistical Service Questionnaire (CWIQ, 2003) found that over 40% of tertiary trained graduates were no longer in the age cohort population after having completed tertiary education.

2006).³⁶ However, despite such difficulties, by 2008, access to formal education has been growing at a rapid rate. The school going population has increased from 1.68 million in 1987 to 3.12 million in 2006 (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008). Gross enrolment ratios (GER) have also increased from 75% in 1987 to over 85% in 2005. This growth has been mainly due to the increasing state payment for schooling through the introduction of safety net programs such as school feeding and capitation grants to districts and schools which have helped to remove user fees for sports and cultural events (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008).

Alongside such educational reform, the Ghanaian government, since independence, continues to attempt to frame its own national civic virtues and values, establish its own agenda to develop the capabilities of young Ghanaians. Here, the story is even more complex—civic education programmes and programmes for youth development and action have attempted to sustain a complex political collage of patriotic, and unifying nationalistic values, individualised human rights and self-help agendas whilst sustaining traditional cultural values and identities.

From public responsibilities to individual rights

Since 1948, the Ghanaian government has attempted to build a political culture which unifies an ethnically diverse and socially unequal nation. In this context, it is important to note the increased range of identities and roles which young Ghanaians have been asked to acquire through schooling. The extent to which they were offered notions of agency and an active citizenship is equally significant.

The introduction of citizenship education dates back to Nkrumah who, in 1948, inaugurated the subject in a document entitled 'Education for All' (Tuwor, 2005). Here he stated that:

the purpose of this document was to study the techniques needed to prepare people for responsibility, and examine generally the problem of building up a sense of public responsibility, tolerance and objectivity in discussion and practice, and appreciation of political institutions, their evolution and progress (quoted in Tuwor, 2005, p. 3)

Nkrumah's government introduced civic education into elementary schools. Tuwor (2005) claims that, in this period the subject was used to train the students to identify themselves as members of a country because individual identity had gone beyond community or ethnic level to national consciousness. Character training and citizenship were directly taught in school' (p.3).

However over the next fifty years, what constituted civic education changed. Each new educational reform brought in new civic virtues and values. For example, using the recommendations of the 1971 Dzobo Committee Report, *The New Structure and Content of Education*, in 1987 the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government under the leadership of J.J. Rawlings

³⁶ National Examination Assessment Data for 2006 is the latest Government data available on literacy and numeracy testing across P3 and P6 cohorts of the school going population.

moved civic education into Social Studies as one of six core subjects³⁷ that would be taught from primary to secondary school level. The effect would be to ensure that all Ghanaians of school going age would receive nine years of training in civic roles and responsibilities, a stronger programme than that sustained by the Kenyan government in the same period. This placing of citizenship education within the newly implemented free, compulsory basic education (FCUBE) made sense within a context where, according to the Ministry of Education (1998) ‘the central goal of the education system in Ghana is to ensure that all citizens are equipped with the fundamental knowledge and skills that will enable them to become full stakeholders in and beneficiaries of development’ (Tuwor, 2005, p.21). Embedded in this curriculum reform was the assertion that young citizens would become participatory particularly in shaping their own lives: ‘the reforms are also designed to enable products of the school system to play a functional role in the society as informed, participatory citizens, economic producers and to pursue self-determined paths to improve the quality of their lives’ (p.4).

Tuwor (2005) further observed that the goal of Social Studies was to provide ‘experiences where students can attain a sense of personal, social and civic efficacy’ (p.5). The seven objectives for the JSS social studies syllabus aimed at making students aware of developmental issues in relation to local environments, national development and global agendas. The emphasis was on knowledge and understanding rather than action. Students needed to:

1. Understand the relationship between the social and the physical environment and their impact on the development of Ghana;
2. Appreciate the impact of history on current and future development efforts of the country;
3. Appreciate the various components of the environment and how these could be maintained to ensure sustainable development;
4. Recognise the major challenges facing Ghana and be able to develop basic knowledge and skills for dealing with such challenges;
5. Understand the dynamics of development in the world and impact on development in Ghana;
6. Develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for personal growth, peaceful co-existence and respect for peoples of other nations;
7. Develop a sense of national consciousness and national identity (Tuwor, 2005, p.5).

Only the last objective directly addressed the ideals of socio-political and national consciousness and unity. However by 2005, Mrs Kumah speaking at the World Congress on Civic Education organised in 2005 on behalf of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)³⁸ went much further, arguing that: ‘The education system must inculcate citizenship, a sense of national pride and

³⁷ The subjects that were contained in this new syllabus comprised of English Language, Integrated Science, Social Studies, Religious Studies, Ghanaian Language and French, stipulated as core subjects at Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School levels.

³⁸ The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is responsible for ensuring that the public is educated on their rights and responsibilities as Ghanaian Citizens (cf Akumanyi, 2007).

identity, individual rights and responsibilities to promote national integration and unity as well as democratic values. It should also foster a sense of commitment to national development' (Kumah, 2005, p.12). Attention to a more active form of democratic citizenship as an educational outcome (rather than just as social education or ethics as in Kenya) was now more clearly articulated:

(T)he school system should serve as a training ground for producing citizens who will cherish and embrace democratic values. These values should reflect the spirit of tolerance of other people's views, dialogue, negotiation, compromise and freedom of expression ... The educational system should nurture individuals to take interest in local, institutional and national governance (Kumah, 2005, p.14).

Several influences have helped shape this broader educational agenda around a participatory democratic form of citizenship. In 1992 Ghana's constitution was revised, capturing the complexity of political philosophies and economic goals. The 1992 Constitution (Government of Ghana 2003a, b) established a clear list of children's rights. Like Kenya, Ghana is a signatory to the Convention on the Human Rights of the Child. As such the country needed to enable public awareness of individual human rights and individual freedoms. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) was constitutionally charged to support this. Hence Adzoe (1995, p.16) points out that one of its functions is 'to educate the public as to human rights and freedoms by such means as the Commission may decide, including publications, lectures and symposia'.

The new Constitution referenced what Adzoe (1995, p.4) calls fundamental human and 'constitutional rights'. The former rights were not granted by government, instead government(s) created and protected the rights and freedoms that individuals possessed³⁹ including the following: protection of the right to life and personal liberties; respect for human dignity, protection from slavery and forced labour; equality and freedom from discrimination; protection of privacy of home and other property; the right to freedom of speech, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, movement, to form political parties.

Ghanaian citizenship is now clearly defined as 'belonging to a particular country from which the individual enjoys certain rights and to which he/she owns certain duties and loyalty' (Government of Ghana, 2003a, p.4; Government of Ghana, 2003b). The third chapter of the new Constitution of Ghana defines the various inclusive forms of citizenship, these are; by birth; adoption; marriage registration; and through parliament.⁴⁰ The revised principles, which underlie the relationship of the individual to the state, were articulated in the new Constitution, offering a broad cluster of national ideals in relation to gender, economy, youth, human rights, freedom, duties of a citizen, etc. The legal

³⁹ Another classification is that of Asiegbor et al. (2001) and CIVITAS Ghana (2002) who distinguish in the Ghanaian setting between: civil and political rights; economic and social rights; and environmental, cultural and developmental rights.

⁴⁰ Thus any person who was a Ghanaian citizen on the day that the constitution came into effect was allowed to continue to be a citizen of Ghana. Similarly, a person born in Ghana or elsewhere, whose parent or grandparent is or was a Ghanaian, automatically becomes a citizen of Ghana from the date of his/her birth.

and political duties of the Ghanaian citizen which were now to be taught in schools are described in the constitution (Government of Ghana, 2003a, p. 13-14) were to:

- Promote the prestige and good name of Ghana and respect the symbols of the nation;
- Uphold and defend the constitution and the laws of Ghana;
- Foster national unity and live in harmony with others;
- Respect the rights, freedom and legitimate interests of others and generally to refrain from doing acts detrimental to the welfare of other persons;
- Work conscientiously in his/her lawfully chosen occupation;
- Protect and preserve public property and expose and combat misuse and waste of public funds and property;
- Contribute to the well-being of the community where that citizen lives;
- Defend Ghana and render national service when necessary;
- Cooperate with lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order;
- Declare his/her income honestly to the appropriate and lawful agencies and to satisfy all tax obligations;
- Protect and safeguard the environment.⁴¹

This list captures many of the collective duties of the individual in relation to nationhood and national unity, law and order, and notions of mutual social responsibility for the well being of the community.

The responsibility for developing citizenship education in schools so that it tallies with this new draft Constitution has lain largely with the Ministry of Education and the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE).⁴² The latter is responsible for citizen education within and outside the school system and provides citizenship services such as public education campaigns on the constitution. This body has the constitutional duty to create awareness among the people about the principles and objectives of the Constitution, as a way of enhancing and promoting civil liberties as well as civic responsibilities (Adzoe, 1995. p.17).⁴³

Recently the National Civic Education Programme identified a variety of curriculum principles which appears to have included any and all of these political goals and even the pedagogic principles associated with such a subject. Although these curriculum principles were not fully

⁴¹ Government of Ghana 2003a, pp. 13-14; Government of Ghana 2003b; Akumanyi (2007) report for the National Commission for Civic Education (pp. 5-7).

⁴² The National Commission on Civic Education was established by the Government of Ghana with the aim of assisting the district assemblies educate their populations on their rights and responsibilities as Ghanaian Citizens.

⁴³ The National Commission on Children is also involved—collaborating with other agencies such as the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana Health Service among others to ensure that projects for children are implemented. Its programmes include school enrolment drives, community sensitization, etc. CHRAJ also collaborates with the Ghana Education Service to undertake school educational programmes to discuss and create awareness on HIV/AIDS education.

embraced in the new citizenship education reform, they do reflect the desire and orientation of Government towards ensuring that children and youth are educated with certain values. These values also suggest an understanding of the need to integrate concepts of unity with diversity within the Ghanaian curriculum. The goals include the inculcation amongst young Ghanaians of: citizenship with nationalism; knowledge and the love of God; nurturing sound and moral character and behaviour; quality education for all; globalisation; respect for diversity; promotion of analytical, creative, critical and problem solving skills; education relevance for life; nurturing commitment among the youth; holistic education; strengthening of multilingualism in schools; environmental awareness; gender sensitivity; training for self employment; democracy; and lifelong learning (Akumanyi 2007).

Following these recommendations, national educational goals for citizenship education were redefined in the Report of the President's Committee on the Review of Educational Reforms in Ghana: *Meeting the Challenges of Education in the 21st Century* (October 2002) in the following ways:

- To promote social justice and equity by ensuring universal basic education and equal educational opportunities for all Ghanaians;
- To provide individuals with knowledge, occupational skills and attitudes and national development with a sense of dignity for labour and for preserving the nation's environmental resources;
- To promote the culture of lifelong learning for all citizens who will continue to develop their intellectual capacities, technical skills and their abilities to enable them to cope with technological and other changes in the global world;
- To promote the spirit of self-reliance that will enable individuals to be responsible for their well being as well as the community;
- To develop in the individual the ability to create, innovate, think critically and be independent minded;
- To strengthen national consciousness and cultivate attitudes of good citizenship and patriotism and through that help preserve the nation's cultural heritage by promoting national languages and desirable traditions and values;
- To develop attitudes conducive to harmonious relations among different ethnic groups and the international community, (Government of Ghana, 2002, p. 5).

A syllabus for citizenship education has recently been developed to reflect these national recommendations⁴⁴ and as part of the preparatory activities towards the implementation of the New Educational Reform.⁴⁵ The Ministry of Education redefined what should be taught in Upper Primary

⁴⁴ Presidential Commission Report 2002.

⁴⁵ The New Education Reform implemented by the previous government is the Government's latest attempt to improve access, quality and management of Ghana's entire education system. The main thrust of the reform is to make kindergarten education compulsory for all Ghanaian children and to add one additional year onto the

level from P4 to P6 from September 2007. The general aims reflect a more active approach that young people would build attitudes and values that would help solve both personal and societal problems. The focus is still one of ensuring national unity, a national consciousness that would help in developing the country. Young people would acquire the desired characteristics of a Ghanaian who was patriotic towards his/her country (MOE, 2007). However, this time, there was also an emphasis not just on attitudes or values, but on developing critical thinking skills.

The content of this new citizenship curriculum encompasses civics, life skills, social studies, religious and moral education (MOE 2007)⁴⁶ with four key sections in the citizenship education program, namely: authority: government, the constitution, the individual's self-concept, interpersonal relationships with the community, and finally, responsibility and justice—a syllabus that is not dissimilar from most such curricula found in Northern contexts.⁴⁷

Evaluating the impact on Ghanaian youth

The history of Ghana's attempt to educate its young citizens and prepare them for citizenship demonstrates a strong commitment to frame national values and address international pressures particularly those around human rights and economic development. The emphasis on national unity is strong both in the early agenda of Nkrumah's education for all campaign, and more recently in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. National unity in a post colonial framework has meant, according to Sefa Dei (2005a), the binding together of the younger generation into a national consciousness which could ensure stability and unity. There are conflicting views about whether this agenda for the education of young Ghanaians has been successful in reducing social marginalisation.

Levstik and Groth's (2005) study⁴⁸ on 150 Ghanaian secondary school students in four junior secondary schools suggests that official and ethnic histories have managed to merge—the former including the latter. The national history which emerges tells a 'story of subjugation, struggle and sacrifice' which does appear to establish a need for national unity and the value of diversity. Whilst nation building, democratisation and participatory citizenship are embedded in the social studies curriculum in Ghana, it does include rather than exclude vernacular histories. Diversity is seen as a strength, a building block for the creation of a national narrative in a way that would not be as present

senior secondary school system. This has been reversed back to three years by the incumbent government. The Government also intends to reduce the number of years for an undergraduate degree from four years to three years. There is also a stronger emphasis on vocational and technical education.

⁴⁶ The new curriculum makes citizenship education in Ghana a compulsory subject at the upper primary level (P4-P6), i.e. the formative years, where attributes and values should be inculcated into children. At the lower primary level, environmental studies, aspects of social studies, life skills, hygiene (health sciences), religious and moral education have been integrated.

⁴⁷ Other agencies outside government schools also engage in civic education. One of the few NGOs working in this area in Ghana is CIVITAS. CIVITAS (2002) has formulated a training manual called the "Street Law: Everyday law". This NGO undertakes civic education and educates operators in the informal sector such as fitters, carpenters, masons, informal settler groups, etc on civic responsibilities. The CIVITAS motto is to catch the younger generation in terms of civic education. It organizes training programmes for teachers, who then acquire knowledge and/or skills to teach with. It has reached more than 500 teachers. Currently it is training 100 teachers constituted by 10 teachers per region.

⁴⁸ A study of 150 junior secondary students and their relationship to ethnic and national history.

in Kenyan education, especially since social education and ethics have been made optional in the secondary school. There is a strong commitment to honour multiple identities and search for unifying elements, but it does not create critical analysis of that history, unity, diversity or model democratic forms of citizenship participation (ibid., p. 582). This sort of research is invaluable in exploring concepts of democracy and citizenship (like that in Kenya and South Africa)—it taps the ways in which young people (adolescents) ‘make sense of their relationship to their nation in the context of their colonial and postcolonial history’ (p. 565). Their teachers on the other hand, worry that youth appear to be adopting European culture, even preferring it.

However, according to Sefa Dei (2005a), his in-depth research suggests that the school system has been unable to develop a sense of heterogeneity in local populations since ‘difference’ is still viewed as a problem. Sefa Dei argues that the process of creating a national identity based on sameness led to silencing difference in ways that maintained Ghana’s colonial heritage:

(I)t is this silencing that has turned the politics of shared identity into a colonial and colonising practice. A colonised discourse of the Ghanaian identity can best be characterised as unity oblivious to difference, that is, unity defined strictly in sameness. However, it is important to reiterate that what is problematic is not the mere affirmation of unity per se but the negation of the differences that connect our individual identities to a shared national identity’ (Sefa Dei, 2005a, p.282).

The desire to create a common citizen in the spirit of nation building means that attention to difference is seen as ‘dangerous, fostering conflict and division’ (p. 482). The history of education post independence, appears to offer an inclusive citizenship to youth, not least in an entitlement to education, and in participating in the national project, and in the notion of a shared identity which connects people to a shared history. Sefa Dei and Opini’s (2007) longitudinal study of diversity and difference in Ghanaian Schools in the late 1990’s indicates that ‘many students continue to be marginalized and disenfranchised, at least in terms of the failure (of schools) to work with their lived experiences and social realities in everyday schooling practise’ (p. 481). If students feel alienated and cannot see their worldview or culture represented within the schooling experience, it is unlikely that there will be equality in educational outcomes. The study reveals that the current schooling experience for diverse groups of Ghanaians is reproducing intergenerational inequalities particularly those of social class, economic background and gender (Sefa Dei and Opini: 2007).

In order for the citizenry to be empowered to realise their full potential, new thinking within the education system would be needed to acknowledge and *challenge diversity* instead of stifling the recognition of it in the face of post independence goals to unite: ‘Disturbingly, education reforms in Ghana have failed to address critically questions of difference in relation to consideration of class, gender, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural differences’ (Sefa Dei, 2005b, p. 270). Sefa Dei argues that the Ghanaian identity is demarcated by these differences with the Ghanaian identity involving a

multi -ethnic dimension at the same time that it shares a common sense of belonging to a community: 'To acknowledge and respond to such ethnic differences actually strengthens and affirms (rather than detracts) from a mutual sense of belonging to a nation' (ibid, p. 278). An inclusive education (which is essential for national development) arguably is one which 'responds to the concerns, aspirations, knowledge, creativity, and resourcefulness of local peoples...' (ibid., p.268). As far as the development of the focus of the Ghanaian school curriculum is concerned: 'In adopting the colonising dividing practices of western knowledge production that divides student bodies and communities into 'good' and 'bad' Ghanaians through the denunciation of difference, the growth of the African centred anti-colonial consciousness is severely jeopardised' (ibid., p.283). Sefa Dei argued that, although prominent post colonial thinkers such as Nkrumah and Busia attempted to shape the education system and to rebuild the Ghanaian mind, spirit and state...unfortunately, when the strategic goal of nation building was attempted but did not include the decolonisation of the mind, and the integration of the many facets of Ghanaian identity particularly among the youth.

Curricula transformation therefore is not necessarily enough when embedded within a 'post colonial framework of education'. Clignet and Foster (1971) suggested that British policy in the colonial Ghana led to a degree of flexibility in the development of an essentially low-cost education, a flexibility that was manifest in the diffusion of missionary schooling following the space and scope granted to them. Educational developments in Ghana continued to be directed by such 'colonial precedents' but also 'public demand and expectations which are to a large measure, a response to the changing characteristics of the occupational structures of both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire' (Clignet and Foster, 1971, p. 269). Steiner-Khamsi & Quist (2000) supported this line of criticism when they argued that secondary schools in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are still patterned on typical Western education models that are British and French, and in recent times, American in nature. This shows in their bias towards academic literacy rather than technical or vocational education.

Commentators on Ghana's educational system have also been concerned about the current ideological framing of Ghanaian education by international agencies. Pryor (1998), for example, saw the influence of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund on less developed countries such as Ghana, which were also caught up in the discourse of neo-liberal economics (Watkins, 2000). Implicit in the education of citizens through mass schooling was not the democratising of the country, but rather the rolling back of the boundaries of the state and the 'voluntarising' society has become the new imperative (Pryor, 1998, p.70). Wilson's (1999) student of 162 Ghanaian teachers found that they were proud of their culture, its hospitality, leadership in gaining independence in Africa, peacekeeping globally and their rich traditional cultures. However they worried that in an increasingly independent world, the things they value were at risk. European cultures seem to have taken over. They themselves enriched their teaching with international ideas and travel experiences, but they were challenged to

find 'Ghanaian solutions' to the problems that the country faced as a result of such global interdependence.

Quist (2001)'s put the debate into perspective, arguing that the lack of recognition of Africa's triple heritage of diverse language, religion and ethnic identity has prevented African youth from developing a sense of belonging, a commitment to serve and contributing as citizens to their nation. British cultural practices of the colonial era have had a profound influence in direct, indirect, overt and covert ways that influence the cultural practices, life-styles and attitudes of students in present day Ghana. The consequences of not finding a solution to link Ghanaian language, culture and traditions to contemporary demands has translated itself into psychological conflict for youth about whether to accept or reject in relation to accepting or rejecting their indigenous culture and values in favour of Western values.

Today, secondary school students in both Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire find themselves torn between learning and mastering their own languages rather than English or French languages; accepting and appreciating indigenous values, traditions and customs as against internalising and assimilating Western counterparts; appreciating national and indigenous music, local drama and the arts and traditional forms of dressing as against Western music, forms of dressing and the arts; watching Western films, reading novels by Western writers in contrast to those by their own writers'' (Quist, 2001, p. 308).

Out of the 200 secondary students Quist interviewed in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire all preferred to be instructed in the English or French language and only 35% of the Ghanaian students interviewed could speak their native language. Students in both countries also agreed that much of their instructional practice and learning had favoured Western patterns and approaches.

The responses from these students point to a case of cultural alienation. However, the roots of such alienation can be traced to the colonial era. The consequences of these experiences are psychological conflict between accepting indigenous as against Western Culture, lack of interest among many secondary school students in their own traditions and customs, a development surprisingly encouraged by some of their educated parents; an inability to speak their own languages as fluently as they speak English or French; a greater tendency and preference for Western ways of dressing, mannerisms, culture, arts, films and dances. The overall effect has been the undermining of the postcolonial project and cultural perspectives of nation building (Quist, 2001, p.310).

Paradoxically, the prominent outcomes of education in Ghana is the fact that secondary school students imbibe Western/international cultural characteristics, mannerisms and attitudes that undermine the promotion, development and sustenance of African cultures and traditions⁴⁹ and

⁴⁹ Cultures in this context (that is, African cultures) refer to "the inclusivity of life evolved by African peoples in their attempts to fashion a harmonious co-existence between themselves and the environment, a totality of life which gives order, meaning and pleasure to social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms" (Sefa Dei, 1994, p. 5).

contributed to creating and sustaining an educated elite more in tune with international cultures than their own. In some cases there is such an aversion to Ghanaian culture and language that young middle class youth will only consider studying a Ghanaian language if it is an additional school subject. Such Western patterns of secondary education may have exposed young people to ideas about nationalism (Quist, 2001, p. 306), human rights (Appiah and McMahon, 2002; Quist, 2001, p. 306), and to some understanding of the nature of European societies as well as the combination of Western and African ideas about indigenous needs and abilities (Quist, 2001, p. 306). In this context, it is not surprising that the Ghanaian government is currently reemphasising Ghanaian culture.

Contemporary discussions about democracy in Ghana focus on how students should fit into society, and become decision makers along similar lines to those indicated by the concept of youth citizenship in the World Bank's World Development Report 2007. However, the type of democratic citizen being proposed is still not likely to experience democracy in the education system. Although as we have seen, Ghana endorsed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989) it has not according to Agu (2000) used this to create a 'child friendly system of education' recognising rights and responsibilities. There is little opportunity to hear children's voice'. Pryor et al, (2005) have pointed out that school councils in Ghana, which should provide a context where democracy as portrayed by the social studies syllabus can be learnt, 'are not perceived by principals, teachers, pupils as a contribution and preparation for democratic citizenship' (ibid. p77). Another sign of the lack of children's voice within the Ghanaian school system is the high level of abuse, both verbal and physical, experienced by children particularly girls in school across Ghana (Leach et al, 2003). Research by UNICEF (2008) also indicates that over 83.5% of Ghanaian children experience some form of psychological punishment. Out of the survey, 89.2% of children across Ghana between the ages of 2 and 14 experienced some form of psychological or physical punishment by mothers, caregivers or other household members.

In contrast, educated Ghanaians have been observed to have a higher degree of social rights (Peil, 1995), economic rights (Lentz, 2006), and political rights (Peil, 1995; Lentz, 2006) than those who have not had an education. Peil's (1995) case study of a suburban community in Accra, Ghana found that having an education enabled people to understand better their social context and the polity. For instance, apart from protecting people from being cheated, 'it makes people aware of their rights; people are able to move freely without any inferiority complex; educated people are more enlightened and can participate better in social life; it enables people to fit into society' (p. 301).

Despite the comprehensiveness of Ghanaian goals for the educational system and curriculum, interviews⁵⁰ with key government officials at the MOE and NCCE suggest that the education system still has a long way to go in instilling civic and moral values and attitudes. For example, as one senior officer at the Curriculum Research and Development Division of the Ministry of Education, Science

⁵⁰ Interviews were conducted in July, 2007 with various Government agencies and institutions involved in citizenship education including the Curriculum Research and Development Division of the MOE and NCCE.

and Sports stated, ‘although citizenship is embedded in a broad range of curriculum subjects it (i.e. the MOESS) still felt it important to have a subject on citizenship as part of the education curriculum in schools to feel part of the society and country at large...’ Despite government’s commitment to developing young people’s capabilities in relation to civic duties and responsibilities, she argued:

Collective responsibility is lacking in Ghana, thus the nation needs massive attitudinal change and if everybody can make the effort, the nation would become a better place for existence ... the lack of time on the part of parents has contributed immensely to the moral degeneration in the country. (Interview with Senior Officer Curriculum Research Division, MOE, 4th July 2007).

There is growing evidence that crime and promiscuity among the youth is on the rise in Ghana. Recent articles suggest that Ghana is one of the world’s major transit arenas for the trafficking of cocaine and other narcotic drugs to Europe. Several media reports have suggested that youth crime is on the increase and youth are the main perpetrators of crime. According to the YWCA Ghana Youth Watch over 70% of crime in Ghana is committed by youth. High rates of unemployment among youth and lack of opportunity are some of the reasons for this high rate (www.ywca.org/world/ghana). There is also concern about ‘moral degeneration’ in Ghana which is assumed to have been precipitated to some extent by parents unable to devote time to their children and decline in attention/ neglect of their role as parents in the lives of their children. There is concern about generational gaps in the teaching of values, and the neglect of parental responsibilities in terms of creating moral and orderly citizens among educationalists in Ghana.

Although the relationship of the individual to the state increasingly has been defined through instrumental economic rationales relating to particular models of economic development. much more research is needed to measure the impact of both formal state schooling on youth citizenship in Ghana, and of citizenship education as a curriculum subject on the formation of their identities. There is clearly a need to understand the competing goals of education and how these translate into equalising or creating destabilising environments for national development, poverty reduction and wealth creation.

RECONCEPTUALISING TRANSITIONS TO CITIZENSHIP

No one is born a good citizen: no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a life time. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline

(Kofi Annan quoted in WDR 2007, footnote 124 p. 183)

As we have seen, nation–building, national growth and the education of the citizen are closely interconnected. Citizenship as an outcome of education is now recognised as meaningful within the

context of nation building (Avoseh, 2001). The ‘nation’ in this context aims to be ‘mostly inclusive with a set of values, institutions and other self-conscious cultural entities for the development of its members’ (p.480). The very concept of nationhood ‘requires the active participation of all citizens that goes beyond the passive level to include full and active participation’ (ibid) in religious, political, social, economic, cultural and educational aspects of the community that is, the national community.

In terms of African socialism, Avoseh argues that ‘in African traditional thought, active citizenship for nation building requires that the individual’s activities must simultaneously promote the corporate existence of the community. This puts humanity at the centre of nation building or active citizenship’ (Avoseh, 2001, p.480). Similarly, political participation within African nations requires ‘the citizen to be a part of the democratic process...though the political system is guaranteed through a consensus, where everybody meets at the market place or village square to participate in the decision making process’ (ibid). Economically active citizenship is pivoted on hard work which may be viewed as the gateway to success and/or greatness as well as an antidote for curing poverty and/or underdevelopment (ibid).

The relationship between culture and citizenship in Africa is also centred around the basic elements of obligations to the community and interpersonal relationships. Such relationship as Avoseh (2001) asserts are ‘sensitive to values such as the sacredness of human life, mutual help, generosity, cooperation, respect for older people, harmony and the preservation of the sacred’ (p. 483). This concept of citizenship has been situated within the extended family and community at large. Individuals are able to develop the concept of self and the notion of community through the process of informal education and training. In contrast, Avoseh (2001) argues that

(T)he active citizen from our contemporary understanding of globalisation is one who acquires more power—especially economic and political, including the ability for coercive force. [Also]... the emphasis on economic power in the larger society reflects in the learning environment where the acquisitions of certificates are more important than the acquisition of knowledge and skills for personal and community benefit (Avoseh, 2001, p.485).⁵¹

This tension between the demands of global capitalism and African development has been illustrated in this paper in a variety of ways. On the one hand, the World Bank’s agenda aims to ensure that ‘every young person should come into contact with a venue for inclusion, solidarity, and participation (WDR 2007, p. 183). This democratisation of education, however, has been lodged within the new discursive framings of human capital, linking citizenship, human rights, poverty alleviation, with national economic growth. The World Bank is aware of the importance of investing in democratisation although it admits the connection to poverty alleviation is never that simple. Arguably democracy can have no effect on growth especially after the positive effects of initial democratisation of a country’s

⁵¹ This phenomenon has been very explicitly exemplified by the Kivukoni College in Tanzania and the Awudome Residential College in Ghana.

governance have worn off. On the other hand, democratisation by ‘reducing corruption, improving governance, increasing demand for human capital investment, preparing for disaster and preventing disasters’ might yet ‘enhance development outcomes’ (World Bank, 2007).

The tensions between Western and non-Western understandings of citizenship are at the heart of the debate (Bhola 2002) especially if Western values entail the promotion of market driven economies which lose touch with social values and the social outcomes intended for schooling. Initially as Jordan (2006) points out,

(I)n post war welfare states the (political culture of education) was aimed at preparing pupils for equal citizenship, cooperation and a democratic form of membership. In that period, the public value of education was political as well as economic. It socialised children and young people for their roles as citizens and made them loyal to the institutions of the country. Any Government included this political value in its calculations of the balance between social and private benefits (Jordan, 2006, p. 116)

This liberal imperative to educate the next generation for democratic purposes through citizenship education courses was one supported by the Colonial Office in the late 1940s (Colonial Office, 1948, p.13). It argued that true democracy revolves around a system of political and economic machinery as well as a certain habit or frame of mind amongst those who controlled the machinery of government. As a citizen needs to be self-less enough to desire that others have what they need, everybody makes the biggest contribution possible on his/her part for purposes of the common welfare. Ironically, the British colonial government in Africa recognised the outcomes of education needed to integrate the notion of national identity and citizenship with a sense of belonging. A Colonial Government paper on ‘Education for Citizenship in Africa’ stated that the effective practice of citizenship cannot be limited to special education for citizenship but should be part of the overall education of the child. One of the effects of schooling/education was meant to draw parents of youth to the government and the related agencies of progress.⁵²

A democratic person needs to be armed with knowledge and wisdom, liberal portions of the truest form of wisdom. Citizenship carries with it duties and rights, e.g. being respected and respecting fellow men [sic] in return. Other issues associated with citizenship and democracy include being well-informed about issues of foreign affairs, economic and other issues related to government; have the gift of straight thinking; be able to keep first things first; being loyal, etc.” (Colonial Office, 1948, p.16).

Education for citizenship within this colonialist welfare tradition was expected to ‘take the lead over political and economic development and having once taken the lead should be careful to keep it (Colonial Office, 1948 p.16).

⁵² However, even at that point, it was clear that schooling had led to educated youth migrating to Europe and supposedly better off countries for purposes of “seeking greener pastures,” employment, and the natural desire for urban amenities (Colonial Office, 1948).

The reorientation of education as simply a private good without equal emphasis of its potential social good in the latter half of the twentieth century in Western Europe has resulted in a different highly individualised model of citizenship for young people. In Jordan's (2006, p.117) view:

In the new model of education urged by the World Bank, WTO and the large education companies, this culture (the social good) is seen as a cost, not a benefit. Commercialisation and the 'choice of agenda' in education encourage parents and students to seek private value without regard for the consequences to other citizens or for the institution of which they are members ... They erode loyalty and interdependence, encouraging autonomy and competition rather than sharing. This may damage the very public culture on which democracy and citizenship rely. (Jordan, 2006, p. 117)

The path taken by African countries such as Ghana and Kenya reflects the *duality of citizenship*—that Mamdani (1996) described—that is located, on the one hand, in the relationship of the individual to the state (liberal democratic citizenship) and, on the other, in a relationship to the power relations and forms of authority found within local ethnic communities. The latter as we recognised above is a major source of identity, rights, responsibility, authority, legitimacy and agency although this form of citizenship does not appear to have shaped the form of citizenship education provided by the governments of Ghana and Kenya.

In post-colonial states such as Kenya and Ghana, Ndegwa (1997; 1998) argues, the tension between these two goals of democracy and market capitalism makes it hard for planning the task of the educational system.⁵³ A major concern is whether such political liberalisation has created rather than reduced social tensions, especially in relation to the education of young people (Ndegwa 1998). Although political rights have expanded (as we have seen), social and economic rights in countries such as Kenya and Ghana have contracted and the support of the individual (for example through employment, health care) by the state arguably may even decrease. Neo-liberal reforms are associated with a withdrawal of rights and entitlements and increasing social inequality and a rolling back of the state. Opposition to the state in this context increased (note the teachers' strike in Kenya in 1997 and post election conflict in 2007). Young peoples' identity politics may be more framed by opposition as a sense of belonging to national traditions and duties.

African nations such as the two countries we have studied are increasingly aware that market theories alone will not empower their citizenry, reduce poverty or help build a human resource base willing to engage and develop their nations. There is increasing interest in tapping the political identities and values of young people as a result of their schooling and community identifications (see for example, Preece and Mosweunyane (2004), Kendall, (2007), Hunt (2007), Abdi, Ellis and Shizha (2005), Carter, Harber and Serf (2003), Unterhalter (2000) Burgess, (2005a and b). These studies

⁵³ The triple cultural heritages of such countries around African, Euro-Christian and Islamic education complicates even further (c.f. H. O. Quist (2001).

suggest the importance of exploring the impact and outcomes of schooling in terms of a broad range of citizenship roles, rights and responsibilities, in terms of the young people's negotiation of marketising principles and neo-liberal values, and in terms of traditional values and cultures, and in terms of the power of schooling to help young people participate actively in society.

There is some evidence that traditional and modern leaders are beginning to invest in the social returns to education and recognizing that these may have untold economic returns if they make education a more empowering force within society. Korboe (1998), however, reminds us of the divergences between the priorities of chiefs and other community leaders and the common citizenry on the other. Communities experiencing hardship were found to have a range of visions around notions of human security and social affiliation strategies to cope with their powerlessness. Defining the social outcomes of schooling would need to consider a wide range of notions of well being, vulnerability and exclusion that go beyond the technical, the economic and the political.

Youth citizenship is a new international discourse which also has to be addressed critically if it is to be of value to those disadvantaged by the economic structures which their citizenship practice is now meant to help function effectively. As Sefa Dei (2005:267) points out, post colonial education in Africa, despite its commitments to 'inclusivity and nation building' largely fails to engage with the glaring disparities and inequities structured along lines of ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender and class, which persist and grow.

The emphasis on the relationship between youth and citizenship clearly raises questions, as we have seen, about how society prepares young people for citizenship. It encourages us to consider inclusionary practices within the distribution of education, the shaping and ethos of schools as institutions as well as the forms of citizenship education within the curriculum. The theme throws the spotlight on the political and social exclusion of the youth. Young people who cannot invest in schooling are distanced from the state project of education for all, egalitarian agendas, and market economies. In that sense they are non-citizens (Benhabib 2004), 'out of place' outside the boundaries of citizenship, not just 'out of school'. Such youth are likely to be especially disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable. Their poverty is particularly acute because often they are without adult support structures to help them out of desperate straights. Often times, governments pathologise and demonise them who tend to be associated with the 'problems' of the social order and problematise them as potential criminals. Youth and youth citizenship are clearly now on the agenda both from the point of view of those wishing to promote the expansion of a globalised free market, but also those who are keen to reduce the social exclusion of young people facing poverty. In this context, the young people's experiences of shifts in generational cultures, traditional patriarchies and family structures, transforming economies and increasing inequalities between rich and poor, are recognised as important, even vitally important, if the possibility of social stability, democratic governance and

national growth is to be realised. Young people, particularly marginalised youth, have had ‘an unpromising political role’ up until now in nation building (O’Brien 1996).

The breaking the inter-generational transmission of poverty means starting with the social and political expectations of African youth and their ability to achieve a sense of belonging and identity, a range of civic capabilities and political agency in the community, the national and the global structures. Young people in poverty, by definition, wait outside the gates of citizenship. Much has been attempted in the name of creating new nations, democratic governance, social ethics that can deliver collective responsibility as well as the development of individual potential. The window of opportunity to include young people is now.

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