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Stimulating Environments for
Engaging in Literacy

Use of African Languages and Literacy: Conditions, Factors and Processes (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia)

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Table of contents

Abstract

1. This is a critical review of available studies related to language use and literacy in Africa. In order to assess the situation and determine the conditions, factors and processes that affect the development of literacy in sub Saharan Africa we reviewed studies related to both Anglophone (Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia,) and Francophone countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali and Niger). We should point out that this is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the situation. We had access to very few studies per country. There is, therefore, a need to conduct a country by country research in order to clearly assess the situation. However, we believe that this study serves as an initial step towards an understanding of the factors and conditions that facilitate or undermine the promotion of African languages and literacy.

2. To promote the use of African languages for literacy and education, African governments have signed several international, regional, national conventions and charters. They have also pledged to implement several plans of action including the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Cultural Charter for Africa (1976), the Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the Declaration of the Cultural Aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action (1985), the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986), the draft charter for the promotion of African languages in education developed in 1996 in Accra, Ghana, and the Harare Declaration (1997).

3. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) both strongly recognize the role of literacy and mass education for socio-economic development as well as for the promotion of peace and democracy in the African countries. At the international level, most African countries espouse the United Nations' vision with regard to literacy. In light of these political declarations, charters, and plans of action, it is clear that African governments do recognize the need to promote African languages for literacy, education and development. However, lack of political will has prevented most governments from implementing the various international and regional language policies and plans of actions. The language policies promoted in African countries since independence have had a negative impact on the development of education and literacy.

4. With regard to formal education, the use of official languages such as English and French as dominant languages of instruction accounts largely for the ineffectiveness of the African educational systems. With regard to adult education and literacy, studies show that since the early 1960s, with the help of UNESCO and a few international development agencies, African countries have implemented several literacy campaigns that have helped to drop the illiteracy rate among the population. However, African countries have not been able to attain the level of literacy that can significantly impact their socio-economic development. Researchers argue that there is a high correlation between African countries' literacy and educational development and their socio-economic situation. They also argue that the current national African language policies undermine the efforts made by governments and international development agencies to promote literacy among adolescents and adults who did not have access to formal education or dropped out.

5. There is a need to firmly reaffirm governments' commitment for the promotion of African languages for literacy and education. There exists a huge gap between the policy stated in the governmental policy documents and the implemented language and education policies. In order to attain 50% or above literacy rate in most countries, African policy-makers must not only have the political will, they must also allocate funding for the promotion of literacy and basic education.

1. Executive summary

6. This is a critical review of available studies related to language use and literacy in Africa. In order to assess the situation and determine the conditions, factors and processes that affect the development of literacy in sub Saharan Africa we reviewed studies related to both Anglophone (Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia,) and Francophone countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali and Niger). We should point out that this is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the situation. We had access to very few studies per country. There is, therefore, a need to conduct a country by country research in order to clearly assess the situation. However, we believe that this study serves as an initial step towards an understanding of the factors and conditions that facilitate or undermine the promotion of African languages and literacy.

7. Literacy and basic education are considered the most significant factors that positively impact a country's socio-economic and political development. For this reason, national and international organizations have developed policies and programs that seek to promote literacy and basic education among children and adults. Since the early 1960s, many African governments have joined the international community to express their political commitment to the promotion of literacy and mass education. This commitment has been translated concretely by at least one third of the national budget being allocated to education.

8. To promote the use of African languages for literacy and education, African governments have signed several international, regional, national conventions and charters. They have also pledged to implement several plans of action including the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Cultural Charter for Africa (1976), the Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the Declaration of the Cultural Aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action (1985), the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986), the draft charter for the promotion of African languages in education developed in 1996 in Accra, Ghana, and the Harare Declaration (1997). The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) both strongly recognize the role of literacy and mass education for socio-economic development as well as for the promotion of peace and democracy in the African countries. At the international level, most African countries espouse the United Nations' vision with regard to literacy. In light of these political declarations, charters, and plans of action, it is clear that African governments do recognize the need to promote African languages for literacy, education and development. However, lack of political will has prevented most governments from implementing the various international and regional language policies and plans of actions. To date, Tanzania is the only African country which has successfully implemented a language policy that promotes a national language, Kiswahili, as an official language in administration and education. In fact, in most countries (even in those where there exists a legal framework) the current policy involves the use of national languages in a limited number of experimental transitional bilingual schools (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger). National languages are generally reserved for non-formal education and functional literacy.

9. The language policies promoted in African countries since independence have had a negative impact on the development of education and literacy. With regard to formal education, the use of official languages such as English and French as dominant languages of instruction accounts largely for the ineffectiveness of the African educational systems. Children are expected to learn in languages they do not understand or speak at home. Unfortunately, they are also evaluated before they can develop an adequate proficiency and literacy skills in these languages. This situation largely accounts for the high rates of class repetition and school drop-out experienced by primary and secondary education pupils in Africa (Alidou & Brock-Utne, 2006).

10. With regard to adult education and literacy, studies show that since the early 1960s, with the help of UNESCO and a few international development agencies, African countries have implemented several literacy campaigns that have helped to drop the illiteracy rate among the population. However, African countries have not been able to attain the level of literacy that can significantly impact their socio-economic development. African countries are recurrently ranked as the least literate countries and they also count among the poorest countries in the world (see various reports from United Nations particularly the annual World Development Reports and the World Bank Statistics). Researchers argue that there is a high correlation between African countries' literacy and educational development and their socio-economic situation. They also argue that the current national African language policies undermine the efforts made by governments and international development agencies to promote literacy among adolescents and adults who did not have access to formal education or dropped out. One can learn how to read and write in a national language, but one may not have the opportunity to use the newly acquired skills in real life situations such as health centers, banks, local court or any other government institution and formal private business. In addition, the implemented policies do not allow the citizens to be active actors of sustained development (Wolff, 2006). The existing language policies (except in Tanzania) also minimize the citizen's ability to fully participate in the democratic process as political activities are often conducted in the official languages. This situation accounts for the ineffectiveness of most literacy campaigns implemented in Africa. The enrollment rates are often low and drop out rates for the various campaign are often very high. In addition, learners quickly relapse into illiteracy as there is no literate environment that motivates them to read and write in their languages.

11. The review of the studies related to literacy in the six countries considered for this study indicated that Tanzania is the only clear success story with regard to the promotion of a national language, Kiswahili and literacy among children and adults. It is also the only country which has demonstrated that it is possible to develop a literate culture and environment in an African language. President Julius Nyerere had a clear vision, a political will and he used his position to implement an authentic educational system and language policy.

12. The World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien in 1990 has, however, played a positive role in mobilizing the international community in order to review the state of education around the world and develop a new vision, a new policy and a new type of commitment for the promotion of education and literacy as a strategy to improve the quality of life among children, women and marginalized populations, eliminate social inequality, promote peace and democracy and combat poverty. It is in this context, that several African countries have stated the need to promote the use of national languages in education. After the Jomtien Conference, countries such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger, and Zambia adopted a national educational law that recognized national languages as a means of instruction in both formal and non-formal education. The ministries of education of these countries have developed new educational policies which include the use of national languages as languages of instruction in both formal and non-formal education. It is important to state that all these countries are in the process of either elaborating their new vision and policy for literacy and non-formal education or they have just started implementing the new policy. Suffice to say, that up to now most governments are struggling to develop an effective educational policy that link both formal and non-formal education. These two sub-sectors are viewed as separate entities even though recent studies show that there is a possibility for cross-fertilization between non-formal and formal education (Aliou Boly, 2006).

13. There is a need to firmly reaffirm governments' commitment for the promotion of African languages for literacy and education. There exists a huge gap between the policy stated in the governmental policy documents and the implemented language and education policies. In order to attain 50% or above literacy rate in most countries, African policy-makers

must not only have the political will, they must also allocate funding for the promotion of literacy and basic education.

14. As far as **recommendations** are concerned, the study highlights the following:

1. One should take note of the excellent technical and political recommendations formulated in the various fora related to language policy and literacy (AU, UNESCO etc.),

2. Secondly, non-formal education must be viewed as a critical sub-sector of education and development. The new models of bilingual education promoted in Burkina Faso and Mali for example, show that there is a possibility for cross-fertilization between formal and non-formal education,

3. Thirdly, the partnership between governmental institutions and the civil society (local, national and international NGOs) must be strengthened. In the past, NGOs have been neglected; yet, they have in the recent years replaced governments in many communities as far as the provision of basic education, socio-economic development and health care (war against HIV/AIDS for example) are concerned,

4. Fourthly, without effective language policy, it is not possible to promote literate environments in schools and communities. Therefore, African governments must go beyond political declaration and implement effectively the use of national languages in education and other socio-economic and political domains,

5. A demand-driven approach to literacy and basic education must be promoted in order to take into account the educational needs of children and adults. In this respect, the curriculum of literacy and non-formal education programs must take into consideration the learner's language, culture, socio-economic background and educational needs,

6. In the information age, the integration of ICT in schools and community literacy programs is essential,

7. The adoption of multilingual and multicultural education policies can influence the involvement of the publishing sector in the production of print materials in national languages. Namibia and Tanzania have eloquently shown that language policy is the most critical enticing factor for the development of a culture of reading and writing in national languages,

8. Finally, there is a need to finance on a large scale is needed to pay adequately literacy teachers, curriculum specialists, and literacy and adult education program developers.

1. Introduction

2.1. Contextualizing the study: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Tanzania and Zambia

15. This study focuses on "the use of African languages and literacy" in Africa. For the purpose of this paper we rely mainly on studies related to language policy and use of national languages in six African countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tanzania and Zambia. These countries are divided into three groups based on their colonial and post-independence language policies. We have Francophone countries (Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali). In these countries French is the exclusive official language of administration and education. Cameroon is an officially bilingual country that uses French and English as its official languages. Tanzania is also an officially bilingual country where both Kiswahili and English are used as official languages in administration and education. Zambia is classified as an Anglophone country with English as its official language. This classification should not undermine the fact that all the six countries are multilingual and multicultural. The local languages are used as the main means of communication by the populations.

16. The main goal of the study is to provide an overview of the conditions, factors and processes that affect the use of African languages and literacy in these countries. The main questions we try to address are:

1) What types of policies are implemented (conditions, factors and processes)?
2) How are literacy programs funded?
3) What type of problems emanate from the implementation of these policies?
4) How can policy-makers facilitate the development of a literate culture in Africa?

2.2. Research method: Critical review of the available literature and case studies

17. This is a desk study. It is based on the review of available documents that were collected from various sources. They include academic research articles, policy documents from ministries of education and international development agencies such as UNESCO, DANIDA, the World Bank, UNDP, the International Education Bureau, ADEA, national and international NGOs.

The library search uncovered very few articles from the U.S.A, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal. Research that is produced by colleagues from African universities and experts from the Ministries of Education is very difficult to access because it is not published in international journals or disseminated through the Internet. One has to know the experts on the ground in order to have access to their work. To overcome this problem, the researchers requested the assistance and input of colleagues from three countries: Dr. Abou Diarra from Mali; Dr. Moses Kambou from the University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; and Dr. Blaise Chiatoh from the University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon.

The researchers also conducted interviews. In Mali, the interviews included Dr. Ngolo Coulibaly the Head of Abdoulaye Barry Institute who is in charge of linguistic research, and Dr. Haidara from the Center of Education. These interviews were arranged by the President of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), Mr. Adama Samassekou, and Mr Etienne Sankara and Dr. Sangare, both from ACALAN. In Burkina Faso, Mrs Aissa Sanou (from the Adult education and literacy department in the Ministry of Basic Education) gave the researchers the most recent policy documents on national languages and literacy. The researchers also had an extensive discussion with her. Dr Toussaint Tchitchi from The University of Benin provided valuable editorial support for the study and also provided policy

documents and journal articles related to language policy and use of national languages in literacy in Benin.

From UNESCO, assistance came from several colleagues including Dr. Amina Osman, Ms. Martina Simeti, Ms. Christine Glanz, Ms. Anna Bakered and Ms. Rita Yoruzo. They provided relevant documents throughout the writing of this research paper and also provided valuable feedback for the first draft.

Most of the documents that were available for the study were policy documents that included more quantitative analysis than qualitative assessment of the situation. Very few academic studies related to language policy and literacy in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Zambia were available. The few articles that were obtained were often written by the same authors.

3. Language policies and literacy during the colonial period

18. To understand contemporary issues related to language use and literacy in Africa one is obliged to recall the colonial legacy as it continues to impact African countries' language and educational policies and practices. Anglophone and Francophone colonial administrators were not interested in the promotion of mass literacy and education in Africa. The main purpose of the education during the colonial regimes was to educate a few civil servants who could work as liaisons between the administration and the indigenous people.

19. During the colonial period, the use of local languages for education and literacy was promoted by missionaries whose main mission was (not to educate Africans or directly promote literacy) to convert Africans into Christianity (Brock-Utne 2005; Chiatoh 2005; Manchisi, 2004; and Ohannessian (1978)). The missionaries used African languages as means of evangelization. Consequently, they worked extensively to transcribe African languages and each mission produced its own orthography for the local language used in the church. In British and German colonies such as Cameroon, Tanganyika (now Tanzania), and Zambia, missionaries were also very instrumental in promoting the use of African languages in formal education. The impact of missionaries in the promotion of African languages during the colonial era is summarized by Manchisi[1] in the following statement:

> "During the colonial period, missionaries came and settled in various parts of the country. They opened churches, hospitals and schools. What one can state without any fear of contradiction is that the drive for evangelisation proved extremely successful because the missionaries used local languages. The Bible and other Christian literature were translated into the local languages. People chanted hymns in the language they understood best i.e. their own local languages, and even in the schools the medium of instruction was in their own local language at least up to the 4th grade. Because of this, there was a wealth of literature in the local languages."

20. British colonial governments were most tolerant towards African languages as they allowed their use in the first three years of elementary school. English was used as a subject in the lower grades and it became the language of instruction from the fourth grade onwards. Such policy positively influenced the use of local languages for literacy and basic education.

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[1] Manchisi, P.C (2004) the status of indigenous languages in institutions of learning in Zambia: past, present and future. In The *African Symposium* Vol. 4 No. 1 March 2004.

On the other hand, the French colonial administration was less tolerant towards the use of African languages for educational and administrative purposes. Consequently, in former French colonies such as Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali instruction was done exclusively in French and the use of local languages was strictly forbidden. In Muslim communities, teaching of the Koran was tolerated, but Arabic was not accepted as a language of instruction in any type of formal school. The introduction of Western forms of education undermined the spread of other literacy practices such as the use of the Arabic script (Ajami) to write African languages (Hausa, Fulfulde, Mande and Wolof). The only literacy validated by the colonial administration was that acquired through Western education, literacy in French and English. The acquisition of literacy in these languages became the main tool for upward mobility and economic gain during the colonial era. Kwesi Prah (1995:1) rightly stated that:

> "the acquisition of literacy and numeracy facilitates social mobility. It provides a competitive edge to people anxious to escape socio-economic limitations of the lower rungs of the social ladder".

21. The colonial educational policies had negative social and cultural consequences in Africa (Alidou 2004; and Wolff 2006). The tiny minority of Africans who were able to attend the colonial educational system gained access to the European languages and as a result of that they were better positioned in their own societies. Literacy in the official languages of the colonial administration triggered a different social re-organization and it created sharp divisions within the African communities. Gender disparity in accessing literacy developed during the colonial period. The colonial administrators recruited more men than women as civil servants. Consequently more boys had access to formal education than girls.

22 .The use of European languages such as English, French, Portuguese and Spanish as the official languages of the colonial administration and education prevented the development of mass literacy and a literate culture in both official and national languages. At the advent of political independence, very limited printed materials were available in the local languages even in Anglophone countries where local languages were used in the first three years of education. The existing materials in local languages were of very poor quality and written in non-standardized dialects. Two types of reading materials were produced during that period. They were primary school primers and reading materials for evangelization, particularly translated bibles. It should also be pointed out that the existing materials were not written in standardized dialects. Each missionary school used its own orthography to produce the reading materials. It became very difficult for children to acquire adequate literacy skills through the reading of multiple orthographies.

23. Lack of standardized languages and quality reading materials in African languages led UNESCO experts to recommend, in the early 1960s, the promotion of French or English-only instruction in some African countries in spite of its own policy of mother tongue education. In Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), for example, UNESCO experts argued that in the absence of standardized local languages, teachers ineffectively used several orthographies to teach the same language. In order to remedy this situation, UNESCO experts recommended the promotion of English-only as the medium of instruction in the schools. They believed that "the use of English will influence the improvement of the quality of spoken and written languages" (Ohanessian and Kashoki, 1978). However, Manchisi (2004:5) reported that "it is worthy noting here that , when the Nationalist Government accepted and implemented the Radford recommendation, it did not however, abandon the teaching of local languages. They were merely, to be taught as subjects".

4. Post-independence language and literacy policies

24. International as well as national legal frameworks or political decisions have influenced the use of national languages for education in African countries since the early 1960s. These legal and political frameworks are presented below. The discussion needs to be further substantiated given that not all relevant documents were available and/or accessible.

4.1. International frameworks

25. An extensive critical review of literature on language policies in Africa was published by Ekkehart Wolff for the ADEA biennial meeting to be held in Gabon in March 2006. Wolff noted that the majority of African countries have not drastically changed the language policies they inherited from the colonial era. Consequently, languages such as French, English, Portuguese and Spanish continue to enjoy a dominant status as official languages of administration and education at the detriment of national languages, which are relegated to non-formal status. Africanists argue that the retention of such policies does not promote mass education, literacy and national integration. Instead, this has had a negative impact on the development of education in general and literacy in both official languages and national languages.

26. Tai Afrik (1995) stated that since 1960, three major international conferences on adult education, held in Montreal in 1960, in Tokyo in 1972 and in Paris in 1985, addressed specifically the issues of literacy, peace and international co-operation, democracy and the creation of learning opportunities for all age groups including women. More recently, he added, that the United Nations declared 1990 the "International Literacy Year" and the period 1990-2000 the "International Literacy Decade". The Education for All conference held in Jomtien in 1990 and the Women Conference held in Beijing in 1995 specifically advocated the promotion of literacy, women's education and the linking of formal and non-formal education in the broad context of life-long learning.

27. At the continental level, several high level governmental meetings, declarations and plans of action emphasized the need to promote national African languages in education and other socio-economic domains. The major political declarations and plans of action include: the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Cultural Charter for Africa (1976), the OAU Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the Declaration on the Cultural Aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action (1985), the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986), the draft charter for the promotion of African languages in education developed during the Pan-African Seminar on "The Problems and Prospects of the use of African National Languages in Education" organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in 1996 in Accra, Ghana, and the Harare Declaration (1997) which evolved from the intergovernmental conference on language policies in Africa organized by ADEA. In Harare, Ministers, experts and Representatives of intergovernmental agencies worked together and developed a very detailed plan of action which includes actions to be taken at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. It states the nature of each action as well as its objectives, targeted results, timeframe, and implementing bodies.

28. As a result of these international and regional conferences and declarations, and political frameworks, the ministries of education and the ministries of social development have included in their various policies plans of action that comprise a component on adult education and strategies to eradicate illiteracy among children and adult populations. The Conference organized by ADEA in Cape Town (2000) re-emphasized the need to move from political declarations to more concrete actions that will promote the use of African languages in both formal and non-formal education.

29. According to Hazoumê (2005:23), it is worth noting that the states have played more a political role through the adoption of laws, which are aligned with the international policy frameworks discussed above. Tanzania is the only country in Africa, which has effectively promoted a language policy that uses a national language as an official language in administration and education along with English. In almost all other African countries, the use of national languages in formal domains is relegated to either the first three years of primary education (Zambia) or long-term experimental bilingual programs (Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Cameroon). The use of national languages is, however, promoted for literacy and adult education and other non-formal educational activities.

4.2. National legal frameworks and recent developments

4.2.1. Benin

30. In 1985, the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa conducted a survey on "African Community languages and their use in literacy and Education". The report indicated that Benin and Togo were the only two African countries with national policies for the use of African languages in pre-school education (page 54). According to Jérémie Akplogan (2005), the government of Benin has affirmed its commitment to promote national languages by introducing the teaching of these languages in the teacher training program curriculum, and creating the National Directorate for Literacy and Rural Media. It also enacted the 1977 law which specifically stipulates in Article 3 that all citizens have the right to use national languages for free expression. Benin also created, in 1980, a Ministry for Alphabetization and Popular Culture. Further, in 2003, Benin adopted a National Literacy and Adult Education Policy. The main goal of this policy is to allow all citizens to use national languages for the development of their cultures and active participation in the democratic process. A ten-year plan (2006-2015) was developed in order to implement the new policy.

4.2.2. Burkina Faso

31. Since independence, Burkina Faso has adopted six laws whose main purpose is to promote legally the use of national languages for literacy and education. According to Napon *(2001), i*in 1969, the government enacted the first post-independence law that led to the creation of the national commission of Voltaic languages. The mission of this commission was to conduct corpus planning work, and to promote national languages. This commission is currently composed of fifteen sub-commissions. In 1970, Haute-Volta and UNESCO launched the first literacy campaign and in 1974 the government created the Department for the promotion of literacy, ONEPAFS. In 1978, local languages were given the status of national languages. Therefore all the languages spoken by the different ethnic groups in Burkina Faso became national languages. It was also in 1978 that the government implemented its first experimental school. In 1997, the government elevated the national languages to the status of languages of instruction for both formal and non-formal domains.

32. The use of Burkina languages was highly promoted during the Revolution led by President Thomas Sankara. According to Paul Taryam Ilboudo (2003) a mass literacy campaign similar to the Cuban style "commando" literacy program was launched in Burkina Faso. Since 1990, Burkina Faso has promoted several educational innovations in order to attain the Education for All goals. The use of national languages in both formal (Ecoles Satellites; Ecoles Bilingues) and non-formal education (Centres d'éducation de base non-formelle; opération ZANU, the REFLECT and text pedagogy approaches) is a central element of this reform.

4.2.3. Cameroon

33. If language promotion were strictly only a matter of legislation or constitutional reforms, then Cameroon would be among the champions of local language promotion in literacy on the African continent. The legal and constitutional reforms she has put in place in favour of the development of these local languages are as numerous and varied as her languages and cultures. Yet, Cameroon has made very little concrete input into the process of fostering the effective use of these languages in literacy. However, certain actions have been undertaken that point to the government's awareness of the vital importance of this process. These actions are:

- The creation of Ministries charged with aspects of language research, development and promotion such as the Ministry of Scientific Research (MINREST), the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MINJEUN) responsible for the promotion of literacy, the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDEB), the Ministry of Culture (MINCULT) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MINCOF).
- Law N° 96/04 of 18 January 1996 providing for the revision of the constitution of 02 January 1972.
- Constitutional provision for the development and promotion of national languages contained in the revised constitution of 1996 that calls for the promotion of national languages as part of national cultures.
- Law N° 98/004 of 14 April 1998 pertaining to the general orientation for education in Cameroon that provides for, among other things, the training of citizens rooted in their cultures and the promotion of national languages.
- Decree N° 2002/004 of 4 January 2002 reorganising the Ministry of National Education that creates pedagogic inspectorates for mother tongues.
- Law N° 2004/018 of July 2004 on decentralisation transferring powers to local councils to implement programmes for the eradication of illiteracy and the management of educational infrastructures. Section III of the law provides for the promotion of national languages.
- Law N° 2004/019 of July 2004 empowering regions to undertake education and literacy. Among other things, the law empowers regions to support the elaboration and implementation of regional literacy programmes, the training of trainers, material production, the realisation of a linguistic map of the region, the promotion of national languages, participation in editing national languages, the promotion of written audio-visual press in national languages and the putting in place of infrastructure and equipment.
- Law N° 98/003 of 8 January 1998 reorganising the Ministry of Culture and thus formally created a department for mother tongues.

34. These constitutional and legal reforms establish national languages and cultures as an integral part of national linguistic heritage. However, it must be noted that though laudable as these reforms appear to be, they have fallen far short of producing any concrete results. But what cannot be equally ignored is the fact that they have provided the frameworks for reinforced research, language development and sensitisation in favour of national languages in education and literacy in Cameroon.

4.2.4. Mali

35. Ngolo Coulibaly (2003) suggested that the literacy issues were particularly addressed during several major seminars organized by the government. Such seminars include the National Seminar on Education organized in 1964, the General State of Education Seminar held in 1978 and the Debate on National Education conducted in 1991(Etats Généraux de l'Education). To respond to the medium of instruction problem in formal basic education and to also promote literacy and adult education among its youths and adult

population, the government revised its language policy twice. According to Coulibaly (2003) the decree No 96-049 of August 20, 1996 defines the modalities for the promotion of national languages. First, it recognized 13 languages as national languages in its Article 2 it is stated that the use of these languages in cultural, scientific, and technological development are encouraged. The state recognizes the right of communities and citizens to initiate or participate in any actions geared toward the promotion of the 13 national languages. The educational law (number 046) signed on December 28th 1999 states in Article 10 that instruction can be offered in the official language as well as the national languages.

4.2.5. Zambia

36. In 1996, the Zambian government presented its current education policy in a document it entitled "*Educating Our Future*". The policy includes a dual strategy for addressing literacy among children and adults. The education language policy contained in this document suggests that in formal education, initial literacy and numeracy would be developed through a language which is familiar to children. The use of Zambian languages as languages of instruction for basic literacy is viewed as a necessary strategy to promote both literacy and learning in students' first languages and English. According to Linehan (2005)[2], the government obtained technical and financial support of £10.2 million from the British government to design the Primary Reading Program. The Primary Reading Program is a seven year program designed in collaboration with DFID. Sampa (2005) argues that the program has been effective in achieving its main goal, namely helping children acquire adequate literacy skills and become successful in school.

37. According to Elizabeth Mumba (2002)[3], since the advent of independence**,** governments have invested heavily in education. However, up to now they have not been able to meet the rising costs of the formal system and the demand for education resulting from growing populations and increasing expectations of the potency of literacy. In 1966, Zambia obtained the support of UNESCO to develop its first basic literacy program. UNESCO trained literacy experts, teachers and it also produced the primers used in the literacy classes. The curriculum of the program focused on teaching basic literacy skills (reading, writing and numeracy). The evaluation of this first program indicated that the program was not effective. The evaluators suggested that the curriculum did not take into consideration the socio-economic background of the participants. The teaching and learning materials were inadequate and the neo-literate quickly fell back into illiteracy.

38. In reaction to the results of the evaluation of the Basic Literacy Program (BLP), the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services implemented a new literacy program that was oriented toward functional literacy. Producers of cash crops such as maize and groundnuts were particularly targeted. The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services created centers where literacy courses were offered and it also used radio broadcasting to disseminate pertinent curricular information. The functional literacy campaign

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[2] Linehan, Shay (2005). EFA Global Monitoring Report (2005). Box 4.8 Initial literacy and the medium of instruction in Zambia

[3] NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA: EXPERIENCES OF THE ADEA WORKING GROUP ON NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA. PAPER PRESENTED AT THE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN MOZAMBIQUE MAPUTO 12-14 JUNE 2002

lasted from 1971 to 1990. This program also faced serious problems. It lacked adequate teaching and learning materials, sufficient funding and human resources such as teachers.

39. After the Jomtien conference, the government invited various stakeholders to address the issue of literacy in Zambia. The Zambian Alliance for Literacy (ZAL) was formed. It launched the National Literacy Campaign which lasted from 1991 to 1994. Its main objectives were presented in the section of the EFA 2000 assessment document. The Ministry of Education Representative stated:

> In order to establish the levels of literacy, funds should be made available to the Central Statistical Office to carry out a comprehensive national literacy survey among those 15 and above

> The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should prepare a directory of NGOs involved in the promotion of literacy activities in the country

> The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should initiate the establishment of a central coordinating body for literacy activities comprising key stakeholders (Ministry and NGOs)

> The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should promote integration of literacy instruction in government programs related to agriculture, health and education for a better living

> The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services in collaboration with the Department of Adult Education at the University of Zambia, should establish nine literacy centers (1 in every province) for the production of materials, training of instructors and provision of short courses aimed at sustaining literacy skills among neo-literates and promoting income generating activities among women.

> The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should identify and focus on reducing illiteracy among districts with less than 50% literacy rates to 25% by concentrating primarily on female literacy programs

> The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services should set up rural libraries along side literacy centers aimed at promoting a reading culture.

The government is currently implementing this policy in Zambia.

4.2.6. Tanzania

40. Among all the African countries Tanzania is the only country which has been able to go beyond political declarations, un-implemented language policies and experimentation. In 1967 President Nyerere proposed, in the Arusha Declaration, the adoption of socialism as a political and economic system for Tanzania. In accordance with his socialist policies, Nyerere conceptualized "Education for self-reliance". According to Mpogolo (1986: 131), Nyerere provided a clear vision of an authentic education. He argued that education must take into consideration rural people's socio-economic, cultural, and political aspirations and needs. As a result, the curriculum content of the schools (whatever the level and the type of education i.e., formal or non-formal) must take into consideration "what people must know and do in order to build a socialist nation". He suggested that teachers should promote democratic

practices in the classrooms by engaging their students in the planning and decision-making processes. He also stressed that teachers and students should develop productive activities related to agriculture, and other socio-economic and cultural activities practiced in students' environments (Yussuf Kassim 1995; Mark Smith, 1998; and Budd L. Hall and J. Roby Kidd, 1978)).

41. Adult education was integrated in Nyerere's education vision. He believed that development goals cannot be achieved without the effective involvement of Tanzania's adult population. He argued that it takes a longer time for children to complete their education. The government could not wait for their graduation to develop the country. In 1964, he said:

> "First we must educate adults. Our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten, or even twenty years. Adults can make immediate use of education" (Nyerere cited in Mpogolo, 1986:32).

42. Consequently, he made an explicit call for the promotion of adult education in the Dar es Salaam Declaration (1969). In this declaration, he stated that adult education must serve two main goals. It should "inspire both a desire for change, and an understanding that change is possible, and help people to make their own decisions, and to implement those decisions for themselves". (Nyerere, (1978:30))[4].

Contrary to the majority of his peers who believed that national unity can only be achieved by retaining colonial languages as official languages, Nyerere believed that national unity could and must be built by using national languages. Therefore he defined a national language policy, which promoted systematically Kiswahili as Tanzania's official language of administration and education. English is also maintained as an official language. Consequently, Kiswahili has been used as the language of communication in all socio-economic, cultural and political domains in Tanzania. It has also gained national, regional and international status as a language of radio broadcasting and television as well as print media in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

Nyerere promoted a bilingual policy for formal education. Kiswahili is the medium of instruction at the primary level and English is used in this capacity at the secondary and tertiary levels. Kiswahili is taught as a subject in secondary schools, and it becomes an optional subject at the tertiary level (Brok-Utne, 2005; and Roy-Campbell and Qorro, 1997).

5. The impact of the post-independence language policies on the use of African languages and literacy

43. The international and national language policy frameworks discussed in this paper have impacted on the use of national languages and education in several ways. However, this impact varies from one country to the other and also from one region to the other. Historical factors also account for the disparity. From the institutional perspective, all African countries have created within the Ministries of Education (Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali) and/or Social and Community Development a department of literacy and adult education (Tai Afrik, 1995). Some countries such as Benin and Senegal have even created a Ministry of Non-formal Education and Literacy. Since late 1970s, UNESCO has supported technically and financially the promotion of functional literacy and post-literacy campaigns in Africa. Mali, Tanzania and Zambia were among the countries which participated in the World Literacy

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[4] Nyerere, Julius (1978). Adult Education: A design for Action. Oxford: Pergamon.

Program UNESCO launched in 1968.

44. In Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali, the Departments of Literacy and Adult Education along with the National Language Commissions and the Departments of Linguistics and National Languages were responsible for the promotion and development of national languages. Several functional literacy campaigns were launched since the early 1970s in the Francophone countries with the help of UNESCO. Adult literacy rates almost tripled over a period of thirty years in West Africa. However, there is a significant disparity between countries in terms of the accumulated number of literate individuals. This situation is accounted for by the state of literacy and education attained by each country at the advent of its political independence. At the end of colonization in the early 1960s, less than 5% of the population of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso had access to education. Therefore the adult illiteracy rate for these countries was above 90%. Mali made significant progress with regard to adult literacy. The number of adult literates increased by seven times over a period of thirty years (6% in 1970 to 41% in 2000). The rate of adult literacy in Benin and Burkina Faso tripled in the same period. It went up respectively from 11% in 1970 to 37% in 2000 and from 7% to 24%. It could be argued that countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Mali have made significant progress since independence. However, they have not reached a level of national literacy that can impact significantly these countries' development. They remain among countries with the highest illiteracy rates, and they are also classified as the least developed countries in the world (World Development Report, 2004).

Highlighted below are significant effects of the literacy policies adopted by each country.

5.1. Mali

45. According to Disarray (2005) the Education for All program has a positive impact on the use of national languages for literacy and education in Mali. Since 1990 new projects have emerged. They include the creation of the education centers for development, the women learning centers, and the vocational training centers for neo-literates. However, Coulibaly highlighted that since 1986 the government has initiated several projects, which were not fully funded. When Mali launched its third education project, it included a literacy component aimed at reducing regional disparities. The main goals of the literacy project were 1) to produce enough printed materials, 2) to introduce new innovative literacy methods, 3) to decentralize financing of literacy projects, 4) to recruit formal education teachers as trainers, and 5) to equip literacy teachers with bicycles in order to enable them to cover several villages.

46. Altogether, 350,000,000 F CFA were needed to carry out the activities related to the third project, but the Ministry of Basic Education was able to mobilize only 150,000,000 F CFA. Despite such financial limitations the project managed to open 786 centers and also produced literacy brochures. The printing of the brochures cost three million (3,000,000) FCFA). In spite of the financial constraints, the government organizes literacy and post-literacy courses. The objectives of the current post-literacy campaigns are to help neo-literates maintain and enhance their literacy skills through an authentic use of the language in all socio-economic activities. With regard to women, the government wants to achieve two main goals, namely meeting their learning needs and involving them more actively in the post-literacy activities in order to consolidate their skills.

47. The promotion of a literate environment is an integral part of the current literacy program. The DNAFLA continues to publish newspapers in the national languages. It also publishes technical booklets related to various subject matters included in the post-literacy curricula. Rural libraries have been opened in a few villages and the literacy caravan sells reading materials in the villages. The distribution of these materials is conducted during the market day when DNAFLA can reach many people. The Literacy Caravan was initiated as a pilot project in 1994. Since 1993, intensive writing workshops have been organized to train neo-literates. Village writers are recruited and DNAFLA organizes intensive writing sessions

which help neo-literate writers learn writing techniques such as editing newspapers and monographs, writing technical texts, poems, novels, and correspondence.

48. Mali has not been able to provide formal education to all its school-aged children. Consequently, more than 50% of adolescents do not have access to education. The Ministry of Basic Education developed a partnership with UNICEF right after Jomtien. It implemented the Non-formal education project for out-of school children and women. This project led to the creation of a three-year curriculum for non-formal education. Twenty-three centers for children and twenty-three centers for women were opened. National languages are used as languages of instruction in this program.

49. Plan International funded another non-formal education project for out-of school youths. It led to the creation of the Education Centers for Development (ECD). Coulibaly reported that in 2000 an evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Basic Education and Plan International indicated that the project had achieved very significant outcomes. More precisely, the project created 202 ECDs, and enrolled more than 6, 907 children in its programs, and 413 learners in professional training. At the local level, 202 committees were created to manage the project. At the national level, a forum was organized to review the curricula of the ECD. Finally, the background work presented above led to the integration of the ECDs into Mali's Educational law 046, signed on December 28, 1999. This law defines the main components of basic education in Mali. Basic education includes: early childhood education, fundamental instruction, and non-formal education (which includes the ECDs and the centers for functional literacy) (Coulibaly 2005:18). One of the main objectives of the current sectorial program (PRODEC) is to create in each Malian village a formal school and an ECD.

50. Mali is also promoting the use of national languages in formal education with its new education reform program "La Nouvelle Ecole Fondamentale" which includes the promotion of bilingual schools called "Ecoles de la Pédagogie Convergente". This bilingual model has produced tangible evidence showing the positive effects of familiar languages on pupils' ability to learn. Different evaluations conducted by both the Ministry of Basic Education and donor agencies show that the use of national languages as languages of instruction is very critical in promoting effective learning in not only these languages but also in French.

5.2. Burkina Faso

51. In Burkina Faso, the involvement of the civil society in the provision of literacy and non-formal education programs is remarkable. At the national level, notable examples include the contribution of the Association "TIN TUA" (i.e. Let's Develop Ourselves by Ourselves' in Gulmancema) in the Gurma region (Eastern part of the country). According to Tiego Tiemtore (2005)[5], the program targets various age groups. And, according to Benoit Ouoba (2000)[6], the founder of TIN TUA, almost a third of the adult population in Gulmu has passed through Tin Tua literacy centers, with men and women being equally represented. The centers are called "Banma Nuara" – a Gulmancema term meaning "Wake Up". A successive bilingual teaching method is promoted in TIN TUA centers. This method requires that a student become literate in Gulmancema before learning the French language. This is coupled with an attempt to deepen students' cultural awareness through giving them access to a collection of traditional, local tales. The effectiveness of the Tin Tua approach can be seen in the high pass rates for students who sit Burkina Faso's national primary school examination. A number of people have also gone on to acquire secondary school qualifications. TIN TUA opened a vocational institute for those participants who are too old to pursue a secondary

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[5] http://azbilingualed.org/News_2005a/for_greater_literacy_go_local.htm
[6] Discussion held with Dr. Ouaba, B. in Ouagadougou in 2000.

education or those who cannot afford it. In the vocational program, students are taught advanced mathematics, mathematics and basic economics, and they also learn other subjects such as health, hygiene, and the environment.

In order to help neo-literates remain literate, TIN TUA created a newspaper "Labaali" (i.e. the news). This newspaper is read not only in Burkina Faso but also in Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Benin, where speakers of Gulmancema can be found. Due to its success, TIN TUA has obtained the financial support of several organizations including UNICEF, SNV, OXFAM Canada, and the World Bank. It has also been recognized as the Ministry of Basic Education's main partner for literacy in the Gurma region.

52. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) is also a very important player in the promotion of national languages in Burkina Faso. The main goal of this organization is to translate the bible. In recent years, the SIL has provided literacy and basic education classes. The SIL developed the alphabet of all the national languages used for literacy in Burkina Faso. The Swiss Development Organization (OSEO) is also actively involved in promoting non-formal education in Burkina Faso. OSEO, Elan et Dévelopment (a local NGO run by linguists from the University of Ouagadougou) *(who is "they")* have initiated the "Ecoles Bilingues" in collaboration with Elan et Développement and the Ministry of Basic Education. Save the Children and USAID have also sponsored a few non-formal education centers in Burkina Faso as a strategy to prevent child trafficking.

53. With regard to the promotion of quality materials in national languages, UNICEF, the German Foundation for International Development (INWENT) and the MEBA, developed a professional development training program for national language textbook authors. Through this partnership, 37 authors were trained and first, second and third grades first language teaching and learning materials were produced for the Ecoles Satellites. INWENT also trained a few editors in the production of materials in the national languages. TIN TUA and Elan et Développement participated in the training offered for publishers.

54. To promote the development of a literate culture in Burkinabè languages the government created the Grand Prix National des Arts et des Lettres (GPNAL). Authors who produced written literature (novels, short stories, drama, poetry, collection of tales, etc.) in the national languages were awarded national literature prizes. According to Sanou (1994), poetry is the best category with 59 collections of poems, followed by tales with 24 collections, drama with 20 texts, short stories with 3 collections, and novels with 1. This was an enticing policy that contributed to the promotion of literate environment in national languages.

55. A seminar on the theme: 'How to promote newspapers in national languages' was organized by INA and OSEO (Oeuvre Suisse d'Entraide Ouvriere) in Burkina Faso from October 1 to October 3, 1994. This seminar came about after a study published by Professor Norbert Nikiema from the University of Ouagadougou showed that out of the sixty newspapers in national languages only about fifteen continue to be published. A recent study in 1998 done by ESOP/ED showed that nineteen (19) papers representing eight national languages were published under the auspices of the Association of Editors and Publishers in National Languages (AEPJLN) with the following types of papers: three bimonthlies (two in Mooré and one in Nuni), four monthlies (three in Mooré and one in Glance), twelve quarterlies (six in Mooré; two in Jula; one in Nuni; one in Pulaar; one in Lyélé and one in Sissala).

56. To improve its literacy program, Burkina Faso has adopted the "Faire Faire" Strategy. The main goal of the "Faire-Faire" Strategy is to involve all stakeholders (governments, private and NGO operators, and communities) in the design of policies, the development and implementation of demand-driven programs. It is also a strategy that seeks

to facilitate the decentralization of literacy services and to promote educational capacity building at the local and regional levels. Several problems have arisen in the initial stage of implementation of the strategy. There is generally no official document that specifies the criteria for creating literacy programs. The government has, however, created a fund called FONAEF[7] for the development of literacy and non-formal education. It has also stated the conditions for financing literacy programs. To access this fund the Association/NGO must fulfil four conditions:

> (a) the operator must have at least three years experience in operating literacy programs,
> (b) the operator must demonstrate a high success rate,
> (c) the literacy operator must have the necessary infrastructure, equipment and didactic materials;
> (d) the operator must also have the necessary human resources (Animators, supervisors and coordinators) in literacy work.

57. Several problems have emerged in the application of these criteria: it has become evident that very few local associations can fulfil these requirements. Most of them do not have the required experience for delivering literacy programs. The government's criteria automatically exclude young operators from competing even if the language in question has no operator on the ground. These selection criteria must be reviewed to allow all literacy operators and all languages to be taken into consideration by the new strategy. Otherwise, only languages such as Moore and Gulmancema will be promoted as the operators meet the selection criteria to operate in these languages.

5.3. Benin

58. In Benin, the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy report (2005) indicated that several literacy campaigns were undertaken up to the mid-1980s. However, the country is still facing the issue of a high illiteracy rate. At the national level, 67,4% of people are illiterate, and among them 78,1% are women. The ineffectiveness of the literacy programs is characterized by the high drop-out rate (more than 11,000 participants drop out of the literacy classes each year) and the loss of literacy skills among former participants. Only 1,71% of women are literate in the national languages.

To promote the use of national languages and literacy among the youth and adults, in 2003, Benin adopted a new national literacy and adult education policy. The main goal of this policy is to allow all citizens to use national languages for the development of their cultures and active participation in the democratic process, and to eliminate illiteracy among children and adults by making sure that school-aged children have access to formal basic education and that those who are 15 years and above have access to quality literacy and adult education programs. The program targets adolescents and young adults who did not have access to formal education. Finally, Benin has adopted the "Faire Faire Stratégie" or "Making it Happen" in order to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders (government services, NGOs, local communities, funding agencies), the delivery of literacy services and also the decentralization process.

One of the major problems faced by Benin in the promotion of literacy is the lack of adequate funding to run the literacy programs on a larger scale.

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[7] Fonds pour l'Alphabétisation et l'Education Non Formelle

5.4. Cameroon

59. In Cameroon the role of the government has been a legislative one and also a facilitating one. The constitutional and legal reforms have established national languages and cultures as an integral part of national linguistic heritage. However laudable these reforms may appear to be, they have fallen far short of producing any concrete results. But what cannot be equally ignored is the fact that they have provided the framework for reinforced research, language development and sensitisation in respect of national languages in education and literacy in Cameroon. The government's involvement can also be observed through the facilitation role it plays with regard to the contribution of international bodies to the process of enhancing the use of local languages in learning. Such is the case with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), the Bible Society and UNESCO. With technical assistance from these bodies, the government, in 1980, set up the Institute for Social Sciences within the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research. The Institute's Centre for Anthropological Research was, among other duties, tasked with the promotion of research on the development and use of national languages in education. It is in this framework that the Operational Research Project, now Program for Language Education in Cameroon (PROPELCA), a product of the then University of Yaoundé, was launched as a pilot project in 1981. Established to facilitate the introduction of national languages alongside the official languages into the educational system, PROPELCA paved the way for local language research and literacy in the country. Today, at least at the level of research, it has clearly been established that national languages constitute the corner stone of learning and development in the country. The different constitutional and legal reforms cited above *(see page 9)* are testimony of the degree of consciousness that prevails in the country with regard to the role of local languages in development. Though crucial in setting the pace for social change consciousness alone is not sufficient for the promotion of languages in learning and development. It needs to be accompanied by real commitment to make things happen. And it is here that failure has been most felt.

60. A major stride in state involvement in the process of promoting local languages in literacy was the launching in October 2005, of the National Literacy Program (NLP). This program, funded by the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPCI), recognises the role of private institutions in promoting literacy in Cameroon. As such, institutions such as NACALCO and SIL have been recognised as potential field partners. It also envisages close collaboration with language committees at the level of local communities. A leading aspect of this working relationship is the use of national languages in the literacy program. Notwithstanding the program, this partnership characteristically fails to explicitly spell out the role of national languages as media of literacy learning.

61. We have indicated that recent legislation gives autonomy to local councils and regions to organise and promote national languages in education and literacy. However, before these reforms came into effect, councils, particularly in the west and northwest regions of the country, were already engaged in literacy promotion in national languages. But these efforts were never by any means systematic or permanent as they depended very much on the dynamism, personal discretion and motivation of individual council leaderships. In some places such as in the Ndu area (northwest region), literacy has been recognised and integrated into the council's priority projects, with the language committee, the Wimbum Literacy Association (WILA), being offered a place on the council's management board. Quite often, the leadership that favours literacy is at the same time that of the language committee or has occupied such a position in the past. It is vital to note, however, that a majority of councils have not shown much interest in this process. Council support for literacy often takes the form of infrastructure and annual budgetary allocations. The reluctance of a majority of councils to get involved in literacy is partly due to the general lukewarm attitude of government in this matter. With the reforms on decentralisation making provision for councils and regions to

support literacy, it is hoped that literacy in Cameroon will witness a tremendous boost in the years ahead.

62. The churches have also played a major role in promoting the use of local languages in education and literacy. This has been very much observed within the Catholic Church where a good number of the dioceses, through their Education Secretariats, have developed local language literacy and education programs. In fact, it is the church and particularly the Catholic Church that provided the foundation for experimenting mother tongue teaching in schools (PROPELCA) in the early 1980s. The Bamenda and Kumbo (in the Northwest Province), the Nkongsamba (in the Littoral Province) and the Garoua-Mokolo (in the North and Far North Provinces) dioceses have played a leading role in this process. Up to now, they train literacy personnel, run schools and literacy centres and produce didactic materials. In some cases they support the establishment of local development committees that plan and manage literacy activities. In the Garoua-Mokolo Diocese, for instance, there is the Comité Diocésain de Développement (CDD). The CDD promotes local development in priority areas such as health and education. Through the CDD *(who is them?)*, the diocese supports training and material production for literacy.

63. The Evangelical Lutheran Church has been involved in national language development and literacy since the 18th century. Among its priority target groups are women and girl children. This is discernible from the fact that the provinces it intervenes in have the highest illiteracy rates in the country, with the most vulnerable groups, women and girl children, constituting the majority of the illiterate. To strengthen its activities, the Church has put in place specialized technical structures. It runs a department of literacy and translation, a print shop and a radio station.

64. Other notable Churches that have made significant inputs into the literacy process are the Baptist Church and the Presbyterian Church (mainly in the Northwestern part of the country) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (in the East, Adamawa and North Provinces).

65. Specialised non-governmental organisations have also proven to be extremely active in the literacy promotion process. At the forefront of this category of actors is the National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees (NACALCO). Created in 1989, NACALCO has a mission to promote national language development and promotion in education and literacy. Its creation followed the need to establish a common platform for planning and managing the activities of language committees. Until its creation, these language committees operated in isolation, a situation that made it extremely difficult to coordinate, monitor and evaluate activities. As a federation of language committees, NACALCO ensures the harmonisation of programs, through follow up and evaluation, and financial support to its members. Its activities are built around two main operational programs, the Operational Research Program for Language Education in Cameroon and the adult literacy program. Its involvement in PROPELCA came into effect in 1991 following the dissolution of the Institute for Social Sciences. Having been involved in the promotion of PROPLECA, and convinced of the necessity for the continuation of its programs, the proponents of NACALCO transferred PROPELCA's activities to NACALCO. In fact, PROPELCA remains a University program. Within PROPELCA, NACALCO works with public and private educational authorities to promote mother tongue education in schools.

66. PROPELCA follows an extensive trilingual approach that enables learners to learn first in their mother tongues and then in the first official language (English for English-speaking and French for French-speaking) at the primary school level. At the secondary school level, it proposes the learning of the second official language (French for English-speaking and English for French-speaking) and one other Cameroonian language. It has three application models, the formal model that uses the mother tongue as medium of instruction, the informal model that uses the mother tongue as a discipline, and the oral model that makes

use of oral mother *tongues* in the building and transfer of cultural knowledge through such channels as songs, poetry, story telling and rhymes.

Initially, only mission schools accepted the program but today a good number of public schools have become partners in the promotion of PROPELCA. Between 1998 and 2003, the number of public schools in the program rose from 34 to 131. NACALCO's involvement in language research and development has made it the leading local institution for language planning and policy orientation in Cameroon. To date, it has a membership of 77 language committees. These include the 77 languages that have the minimum development level, namely, an alphabet and orthography.

5.5. Zambia

67. According to Sampa (2005:73) "the Primary Reading Program (PRP) implemented in Zambia is one of the few programs that have succeeded on a large scale". Between 1999 and 2002, the Ministry of Education conducted two evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the PRP. Both evaluations showed that children's performances in reading both in Zambian languages and English had improved. According to Sampa (2003:45), there are six main factors that account for the success of the PRP. These factors are:

1) An appropriate language policy that use local languages that are familiar to children to teach reading and writing
2) The allocation of appropriate time for teaching literacy in elementary schools. Literacy and numeracy became a central element of the curriculum
3) The implementation of an effective teacher training program that includes initial training for student-teachers and in-service training offered to teachers who are already serving in the schools
4) Sensitization of all stakeholders (parents, teachers, children, policy-makers)
5) Creation of attractive classrooms to motivate children
6) Promotion of team work among teachers and ministry of education officials.

68. From 1990 to 1999, the Ministry of Education opened learning centers and distance education courses. Dickson Mwansa (1993) conducted a needs assessment study to determine what the potential learners (200 respondents) would want to learn. He found that the respondents wanted to learn farming techniques, health education, business management, local languages, home management, wild life, gender issues and English. After this assessment the government launched a new literacy program. According to the EFA (2003) report, 46,000 youth and adults benefited from this program. In addition, 95,000 primers (reading materials for literacy) were printed, 1,926 teachers received training and 98,701 people received literacy instruction in the national languages. Seventy three percent of the participants were women (see Table 5 and Figure 1). In 1990, 41.3% of women were illiterate. In 2003, 25.2% were classified as such. This shows that the illiteracy rate dropped by 16.1% between 1990 and 2003.

69. A survey conducted by Aitchison and Rule (2005) in the SADC countries indicated that Zambia may achieve a 94.2% literacy rate by 2015. It is important to indicate that disparities still exist between urban and rural areas, and also between men and women. It is estimated that by the year 2015 the gender illiteracy rate gap will have been narrowed as follows: 5.1% for men versus 6.5% for women. This positive trend can be attributed to the recent educational and language policies implemented by Zambia, namely, the Primary Reading Program in formal education and the National Literacy Policy aimed at the reduction of poverty in the country.

70. Mumba *(2002)* argues that Zambia must continue to address the illiteracy issue among young adults in order to prevent social issues. The illiteracy rate among youths (14 to

20 years old) is greater than that of adults who are 21 to 45 years old. This has negative social and economic consequences because Zambia's population is relatively young and the country relies on the active involvement of this particular population in socio-economic activities. It is also a challenge to effectively address the HIV/AIDS problem with a high rate of illiteracy among the most vulnerable people, namely, adolescents and young adults.

5.6. Tanzania

71. Among all the Sub-Saharan African countries, Tanzania made the most significant progress with regard to the use of Kiswahili and the promotion of literacy among children and adults since the 1970s. The government led by President Julius Nyerere implemented major literacy initiatives over a nine year period (1964-1975). These initiatives include: the five year plan (1964-1969), and the UNESCO Experimental World Literacy Project launched in 1968. In addition, there was a second Five-Year Development Plan (1969-1974) which was launched under the slogan 'To Plan is to Choose' (*Kupanga ni Kuchagua)*, and the new mass education campaign entitled 'Time to Rejoice' (*Wakati wa Furaha)* that was launched in 1973. In 1973 and 1974 the government developed relevant policy and established a Division of Workers' Education to promote education in the workplace (Aitchison and Rule, 2005)

72. According to Mulukozi *(2004:2)*[8], the success of Kiswahili in Tanzania is based on the fact that as early as 1962, President Nyerere realized that a policy statement is not enough to promote Kiswahili. He had to back up his ideology and language policy with an effective implementation program. The two main factors that accounted for the success of the promotion of the Kiswahili language were a sound education language policy and the creation of governmental facilities to carry out the implementation of this policy. The government put in place six major initiatives to carry out the language policy and to promote literacy in Kiswahili, as follows (Mulukozi, 2004:2):

1) the adoption of Kiswahili as a national language in 1962
2) the adoption of the policy of Ujamaa and Self-Reliance in 1967
3) the adoption of Kiswahili as the official language of administration in 1967
4) the adoption of the policy of education for self-reliance and the promotion of Kiswahili as the sole medium of instruction in primary schools in 1968
5) the abandonment of the Cambridge School Certificate Examination in the early 1970s
6) the adoption of the cultural policy (Sera ya Utamaduni) in 1997

73. The government also created several institutions, which carried out various activities including training, research and publications. These institutions include:

1) the Ministry of Culture created in 1962
2) the Institute for Kiswahili Research (IKR) created in 1964
3) the Tanzania Publishing House created in 1966
4) the National Kiswahili Council (BAKITA) created in 1967
5) the Department of Kiswahili at the University of Dar es Salaam created in 1970
6) the EACROTANAL established in 1976
7) the Institute of Kiswahili and Foreign Languages, Zanzibar-TAKILUKI established in 1978
8) the Tanzania culture fund (Mfuko wa Utamaduni Tanzania) founded in 1998

74. Two five-year development plans (1964-1969 and 1969-1974) were launched to address development and educational problems. Through the World Literacy Program (WLP),

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[8] Mulokozi, M. M. (2004) Kiswahili as a National and International Language.
http://www.helsinki.fi/hum/aakkl/documents/kiswahili.pdf

UNESCO and the Norwegian government (represented by NORAD) provided, from 1969 to 1976, technical and financial support for the implementation of adult education programs. Zakayo Mpogolo (1986) conducted a thorough evaluation of post-literacy and adult education in Tanzania. He suggested that in 1977 Tanzania was able to reduce significantly the illiteracy rate among adult (the illiteracy rate was reduced by 12% from 1975 to 1977. The factors that account for this positive development are presented below:

1) Financial and technical support from UNESCO and NORAD

2) The effective implementation and coordination efforts of the Directorate of Adult Education whose work included the preparation, supervision, and coordination of literacy and post-literacy programs, the development of curricula for both literacy and post-literacy programs (literature, agriculture, health, home economics, Kiswahili, culture, defence, typing, political education, vocational training, etc.) and the coordination and supervision of literacy supporting programs

3) The involvement of local authorities and adult learners in the planning and implementation of the literacy campaigns

4) Training programs for literacy workers, teachers, and educational planners

With regard to the training of literacy personnel five main actions were taken. They included the implementation of the Mwanza Project (1969-1973) whose main purposes were the training of all types of literacy agents, the organization of workshops and seminars, the creation of two training institutions, namely, the Folk colleges of education, and the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) and the University of Dar es Salaam. The IAE and the University of Dar es Salaam are particularly involved in research related to the advancement of literacy and education in Kiswahili.

5) The government also developed structures that facilitated the development of a literate environment and reading culture in Kiswahili, as follows:

- It created the Newspaper Elimu Haina Mwisha with the support of UNESCO and NORAD. It printed 100,000 copies of Elimu Haina Mwisha monthly. The newspaper was distributed in the rural libraries. The evaluation conducted in 1975 indicated that 2781 libraries were created, and Elimu Haina Mwisha was read by 97% of the adult literate population. It is important to point out that the lack of printed materials is often cited as one of the barriers to the promotion of African languages as official languages in education and other socio-economic domains. Tanzania has managed to overcome this problem by creating its own printing house, and by promoting Kiswahili in government, education and other socio-cultural spaces. Literacy in Kiswahili has also been promoted through print media as well as radio and television.

- Rural libraries were primarily created as a strategy to prevent relapse into illiteracy among new literates, but they also served the entire community.

- For the production of reading and educational materials the Mwanza Project organized intensive authors' workshops in the different regions.

6) The use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction throughout primary schools significantly influenced the development of formal basic education and literacy in Tanzania. In 1974 only 50% of school aged children were enrolled in school. In 1978 Tanzania managed to enrol 93%. This was a significant achievement when one considers African countries' performance in both formal and non-formal education.

75. The economic recession of the 1980s hit Tanzania. According to Wedding (2004:72) during the "1980s and 1990s Tanzania was the scene of three major structural (i.e. political) and economic changes: globalization on an international level; and, on a national level, deregulation of the economy (the "structural adjustment plans" imposed on Tanzania by the IMF and the World Bank). During this period Tanzania experienced a decline in its literacy rate. According to Aitchison and Rule (2005) several factors accounted for this situation:

> …a decline in enrolment and a high drop-out rate in primary schools; administrative problems in the education system; a lack of political will to support adult literacy since the stirring days of Nyerere and Ujamaa; and severe financial constraints in a poor country with multiple priorities.

76. Since Jomtien, the government has implemented two major adult education programs, namely, the Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) Program and the Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) Program. The ICBAE is based on the Freirian philosophy of adult education and literacy. It integrates a community-based and learner-centered approach in order to address gender equity and sustainable development. The program also seeks to empower learners through not only the curriculum it offers but also through the income generating activities which lead to ownership. The COBET program is designed for pupils (11-18 years) who dropped out of primary schools and those who did not have the chance to attend school. Even though both programs are effective, the main challenge is finding the money for upscaling. Aitchison and Rule (2005) argue that the programs will face serious problems when donor funding is withdrawn.

77. From the above discussion on the impact of language policies and the use of African languages in Africa, Tanzania shows that in order to create an effective literacy policy that stimulates the development of a literate culture and environment, African leaders must have a clear vision, develop effective multilingual policies and possess the political will to implement these policies. According to Mulukozi, the success of Kiswahili in Tanzania is based on the fact that President Nyerere realized that an ideology alone was not enough to promote Kiswahili. There was a need to back it up with a language policy and an effective implementation program. The two main factors that accounted for the success of the language policy were a sound education language policy and the creation of governmental structures to carry out the implementation of that policy. Birgit Brock-Utne (2005:51) points out that Kiswahili has become a uniting language as it serves as a lingua Franca (language of wider communication) for ninety nine percent (99%) of the population in Tanzania. Today, Kiswahili is used as a national language and a lingua francae in Eastern and Central Africa, and in a few Southern African countries. It also serves as an international language that is taught in several African, European and American universities. An extensive body of literature has been produced in Kiswahili. This language is also used for radio broadcasting not only in countries such as Tanzania, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, but also in Rwanda, the United States of America (Voice of America), in the United Kingdom (BBC radio) and in China (Radio China) and in Germany (Deutch Welle).

78. Brock-Utne also highlights that its use in all socio-economic, educational, cultural (the majority of newspapers in Tanzania are published in Kiswahili), legal and political domains since 1967 has enabled Kiswahili to become a highly sophisticated language which can express all types of realities and knowledge including science and technology. Today, Kiswahili is taught as a discipline in several African, European and American universities. Major literary and scientific works are produced in this language. In that respect Brock-Utne (2005) argues that Kiswahili has shown that an African language can be used in domains often reserved for European languages such as English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. In this regard she stated that:

> "This language [Kiswahili] is used as a language of instruction through all the seven years of primary school and in some teacher training colleges. The Department of Kiswahili and the Institute for Kiswahili Research at the University of Dar es Salaam use Kiswahili as the language of instruction in all its courses and meetings. They show by their example that an African language may well be used for the most sophisticated discussions and for research" *(page 51)*

79. Now, the main question, which has triggered so many debates among Africanists is how can other African countries achieve the type of success that Tanzania has been able to achieve with its national language policy? Can and should African leaders reproduce the type of language policy that Nyerere implemented in Tanzania? In the era of democracy and globalization what would be the role of the state, the community and the regional and international organizations in the promotion of national languages and the creation of literate environments in African societies?

80. One may argue that President Nyerere was successful because he was able to impose Kiswahili in a multilingual country during a one party regime. This imposition may not be possible today due to the fact that African countries have adopted democracy as a new system of governance. The adoption of a language policy that drastically changes the status quo must be democratically negotiated. Governments must welcome positively this change as it provides a political and legal framework for involving all stakeholders. Also, such change requires careful evaluations of various language policy options before a particular one is adopted. According to Ekkehart Wolff (2006:19), the problem is not designing language policy. The problem lies in the strategies that governments use to convince all stakeholders of the relevance of the policy to their lives or particular interest. With regard to the promotion of multilingual and multicultural education in Africa, Wolff suggested that in a democratic society, the government must be able to develop strategies for:

> "Communicating the benefits of reformed quality primary education (involving mother-tongue and lingua franca as medium of instruction, and culturally adequate educational contents) to the non-traditionalist sectors of the general public, i.e. largely those who have profited themselves in some way from formal education of the old system, aims at considerable attitudinal changes which can only be effected if and when the new educational policy creates notable if not drastic educational successes with ensuing increased job opportunities, even for members of the present "elite" *(page 19?).*

6. What has been learned from the review of literature on language policy and the use of African languages and literacy?

81. The current language policies promoted in most African countries undermine the use of national languages for the development of education and societal literacy. The implemented policies do not allow the citizens to be active actors of sustained development and thus fulfil their civic duties and responsibilities within the community. In this context, the language policies promoted in Africa negatively impact the promotion of democracy and the decentralization of governmental institutions. The use of languages that people speak, understand, read and write, is crucial for the promotion of democracy and decentralization at the local, regional and national levels.

82. Many meetings have taken place at very high levels in Africa resulting in many declarations and detailed plans of action. Governments have also created institutional infrastructure (Departments of literacy and adult education, Ministries of Non-formal

Education, literacy and adult education centers). Local and international NGOs have also contributed tremendously to this endeavour. This suggests that the visions and philosophies have been defined. However, none of the visions and philosophies has been clearly realised in Sub-Saharan African countries, except in Tanzania. Lack of political will and extreme poverty are the two main factors that prevent African governments from adopting and implementing the use of national languages in formal domains.

83. Since Jomtien, a few African governments have promoted at a smaller scale new models of basic education in both formal and non-formal domains that have produced very encouraging results. In Francophone Africa, one can cite the "Ecoles de la Pédagogie Convergente" in Mali, the "Ecoles Bilingues" in Burkina Faso, and PROPELCA and NACALCO's bilingual schools in Cameroon. These are experimental schools that use national languages and official languages (transitional bilingual model) and a culturally adapted curriculum to promote quality basic education in areas in which the governments have not been able to open formal primary schools. The success of these experimental schools is based on their ability to promote dual literacy among children, adolescent and adults, and an education system that helps learners to be more integrated and productive in their social and cultural milieu.

84. With regard to cost-effectiveness, Kathleen Heugh (2006: 23) suggests that "the arguments that cost prevents mother tongue education (MTE) are in fact based on flimsy perceptions rather than empirical evidence". Indeed, in Burkina Faso, Ilboudo (2003) indicates that through the reduction of the number of years for primary education the "Ecoles Bilingues" run by OSEO are more cost-effective than the government-run primary schools.

85. In Anglophone Africa, REFLECT Projects in Uganda and Tanzania offer a new approach to literacy that integrates not only the acquisition of literacy skills but also adds an empowerment dimension that helps learners think over their own lives and circumstances, and learn how to learn and thus be able to make informed decisions. These new models of education must be considered for up-scaling at the national levels and African countries should learn from each other instead of adopting only models of education coming from Western societies.

86. The Jomtien (1990), Beijing (1995), and Dakar Conferences stated the need to promote girls and women's education. The studies reviewed indicate that very little progress has been done in that regard. It is true that campaigns have been organized to sensitize policy-makers, communities and parents, but research indicates that girls and women continue to lag behind boys and men as far as access to basic education is concerned.

87. Lack of financial means to execute the programs has undermined governments' efforts to promote literacy. Due to extreme poverty, African governments are also subjected to changes occurring at the international levels. This affects how they plan and execute literacy and non-formal education programs. This dependence on international aid often limits governments' ability to promote the type of policies they adopted in their political declarations and plans of action. Tai Afrik (1995) points out that "since Jomtien there have been new waves of funding sources from four main partners of African education: UNDP, the World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF"*(5)*. Multilateral and bilateral agencies have also contributed to the promotion of basic education, including literacy and adult education. These agencies include IFOMA, DANIDA, CORD, CIDA, SIDA, IIZ/DVV, BMZ, the Islamic Call Bank, the African Development Bank, and ISESCO. However, overall, literacy and non-formal education have not been the main educational priority of governments and international development agencies. The focus and investment have largely been on formal education. Such a policy strategy has had a negative impact on the promotion of literacy and non-formal education in Africa. Unfortunately, the huge investments in formal education have not produced desirable results. Formal basic education in most African countries is ineffective and inefficient due largely to the promotion of inadequate education language policy.

88. Fortunately, in recent years the World Bank has recognized the pertinence of bilingual education in Africa. An example of this change of perspective is evident in its support for the promotion of "the Ecoles de la Pédagogie Convergente" in Mali and its review of literature on bilingual education in Africa (2005). The conference of the Ministers of Education of Francophone Africa (CONFEMEN) issued several policy papers where it calls for the promotion of "langues partenaires" (i.e. African languages) for basic education. Evidently, the momentum is there. Governments must seize it and promote literacy and the use of African languages in education and development.

89. There is a serious shortage of literacy specialists in Africa, particularly in Francophone countries. It is therefore very difficult to promote literacy and non-formal education in this context. The implementation of the "Faire Faire Strategy" is difficult in countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali mainly because the strategy relies on the availability of human resources who can develop programs, implement them and evaluate them. The decentralization of the basic education sector largely depends on the availability of qualified human resources such as literacy teachers and supervisors. Up-scaling of best practices and policies depends not only on the availability of funds but also on the availability of relevant expertise to carry out the activities.

90. Anglophone countries have made a significant progress in building capacity in the area of literacy and non-formal education. Francophone countries can learn from Anglophone experiences. Tanzania offers the best practice with regard to human resource development for literacy and adult education. Tanzania has been able to promote literacy in Kiswahili in all socio-economic and educational domains because it created three key institutions, namely, the Folk Development Colleges, the University of Dar es Salaam and the Institute of Kiswahili, all of which train literacy teachers and professionals.

91. One of the major problems highlighted in all the studies (except those related to Tanzania) is the lack of an adequate literate environment in the national languages which helps neo-literates to continuously use the newly acquired skills and competencies to carry out socio-economic, political and cultural activities in their languages. People are, at the beginning, very enthusiastic to learn how to read and write in their languages. But they quickly realize that they have nothing to read in the national languages besides the literacy brochures they got from the classes. Also, they cannot use their reading and writing skills to conduct transactions with civil servants. Neo-literates are not encouraged to use their competencies in areas such as courts and health services because the civil servants cannot read and write in the national languages.

92. The promotion of national languages at the local and regional levels, and also in public services such as health facilities, the courts, schools and the local, regional and national assemblies creates an enticing environment for the use of national languages in both oral and written communication. It also influences the creation of a literate environment.

93. Publishing in national languages is, therefore, an important aspect that must be tackled. To promote this sector, governments and international organizations should encourage the publishing sector by promoting a language policy which promotes national languages in both formal and non-formal education. They should also support private publishers by eliminating customs and excise duty on paper imported for the production of printed materials for literacy, education and culture. Governments can encourage trans-national book production for the trans-border languages by minimizing taxes and tariffs on books and raw materials used to produce books. Bookaid experts suggest that intra-African

trade need to be promoted to develop and sustain an African book chain (Bookaid)[9].

94. Finally, African governments and international organizations such as the World Bank should revise the current binding procedures to eliminate unfair competition among national and international publishing companies as pointed out by Jung and Ouane (2001:334) and members of APNET (Aliou Sow, 2004).

7. Perspectives

95. According to the late Joseph Akoha (2001:147) no country in the world has achieved national integration (nation-building) by repressing the cultures and languages of its population. It is, therefore, inconceivable that African countries would escape this basic socio-historical rule. Akoha rightly stated:

> Nation-building…cannot be successfully achieved in such societies by repressing the cultures and languages of some groups in favor of foreign languages or cultures, nor even in favor of a locally dominant group. On the contrary it is in the free interplay of the juxtaposed cultures mediated by literacy and literature in local languages that a nation may emerge, where every component feels involved and concerned. This leads to issues of democracy and literacy *(page 147))*.

96. Language, culture and literacy are elements that define individuals and their sense of belonging to a group or a nation. It is, therefore, imperative that African governments recognize the true value of the national languages for the development of national identity and the promotion of democracy. Governments must arm themselves with the political will in order to implement the vision and action plans elaborated in their educational policy documents and regional political declarations.

97. The use of national languages is a critical factor in the promotion of democracy, good citizenship, effective decentralization and training of local officers and elected representatives.

98. Africans need to develop technological literacy in order to be active participants in the production and use of global knowledge. In the information technology era the speed with which one accesses information and acquires knowledge determines not only the level of individual development, but that of society as well. In this context, African countries must integrate in their educational systems and curricula information, communication technologies (ICT). The role of the media is in this respect important not only for the mobilization of people for literacy and basic education, but also for the acquisition and dissemination of information and knowledge. Local radio stations have been the most effective tools for politically mobilizing the masses but also for mass education. They use national languages and they are the most widely used source of information in Africa. They can be used effectively for basic education and literacy. According to Amina Osman *(December 2005, comment to the author)*, Simili Radio operating in Northern Ghana actively promotes community involvement in its program content and develops its schedule according to the priorities established through a close relationship with its listeners. The program schedule consists of basic education, health and agriculture. The program producers use a range of resources for the agricultural program, such as the local University Department and the Animal Research Institute, extension officers and NGOs. All over Africa one also notices the proliferation of private radios that promote very interactive and participatory shows. They encourage people to call and share their opinions about political leaders, cultural and

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[9]. BookLinks- BookAid International. Issue 6 Winter 04.
http://bookaid.org.resources/downloads/booklinks_6.pdf

economic matters. The use of cellular phones even in the most remote areas has facilitated the participation of rural and urban people in these radio programs. The Internet has also facilitated communication among people. In urban areas there is a proliferation of private communication centers that use both telephone and computers. It is, therefore, important that literacy and non-formal education programs recognize the availability of these information and communication technologies in Africa and the fact that people are already using them. The integration of ICT in the literacy program can be a motivating factor for the recruitment of learners. The COLLIT model implemented in Tanzania is an excellent model for the integration of ICT in literacy and non-formal education programs in Africa. According to Tai Afrik (1995) the distance education programs implemented in South Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana and Swaziland have provided the opportunity to avail literacy and continuing education courses to adult learners through the use of radio, television, computers and correspondence. In West Africa (Mali, Gambia and Burkina Faso), radio and newspapers are the main technologies used for distance education.

99. The demand for literacy and basic education should be tied to the question of relevance and effectiveness. Literacy programs must be contextualized in order to be effective. Consequently, a needs assessment that defines the demand for literacy programs must always be conducted before setting up the program. The learners must be included in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the literacy and adult education courses. This strategy must foster ownership and leadership among participants. With regard to girls and women's education, a demand-driven approach includes the concern of women and the context within which women and girls use literacy. The research conducted by Ousseina Alidou (2005) and Uta Papen (2005:212) on women's literacy in Niger and Namibia, respectively, clearly indicate that quantitative analysis alone cannot define the literacy needs of the learners. Consequently, they argue for the integration of qualitative analysis based on ethnographic research to define not only "the learners' everyday-life uses of literacy, but also their conception of literacy and their literacy-related aspiration." Papen rightly suggests that these three elements must be understood within the social, political, cultural and historical context of the learners' community. Therefore, understanding this context implies understanding the impact of colonization, traditions and cultures, and economics on the lives of girls and women in Africa. Finally, ethnographic research can significantly help literacy curriculum developers and educational program planners understand the meaning of literacy for people and how to develop more responsive literacy programs.

8. Recommendations

100. To write new recommendations here is to ignore the excellent work produced in many fora related to language policy and literacy in Africa. Excellent technical and political recommendations were formulated in each one of these fora. Notable fora include the OAU Cultural Charter for Africa (1976), the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the Declaration on the Cultural Aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action (1985), the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986), the draft charter for the promotion of African languages in education produced in 1996 in Accra, Ghana, and the Harare Declaration (1997), which evolved from the intergovernmental conference on language policies in Africa organized by ADEA.

- Therefore, this study seriously **urges African governments to actualize the language policy plan of action formulated in Harare in 1997, during the intergovernmental conference. This plan includes not only actions to be taken at the national level, but also those that need to be taken at regional and continental levels for the promotion of adequate language policies and literacy in Africa.** The leadership role of governments has been clearly defined in this plan of action which integrates a vision, a policy framework and the activities that governments can organize at the regional, national and local

levels to promote literacy in schools and communities in order to create literate environments in Africa. This plan also takes into account the development of cross-border languages as well as the need to promote them as viable means of communication in formal and non-formal domains in Africa. The Appendix presents the plan of action proposed by highly respected linguists and education experts as well as Ministry of Education and international development agencies' representatives.

- Secondly, **non-formal education must be viewed as a critical sub-sector of education and developmen**t. It is recommended that adequate funding be allocated nationally and internationally for the effective implementation of this sub-sector. After all new models of bilingual education promoted in West Africa (Ecoles Bilingues in Burkina Faso for example) show that there is a possibility for cross-fertilization of formal and non-formal education (Aliou Boly, 2006).

- Thirdly, **the partnership between governmental institutions and civil society (local, national and international NGOs) must be strengthened in order to integrate literacy and basic education in all development programs**. The NGOs must be given opportunities through training to enhance their operational capacities. Their role is critical in promoting literacy for democracy, peace and development in African countries. In the past NGOs have been neglected. Yet they have in recent years replaced governments in many communities as far as the provision of basic education and health care (war against HIV/AIDS) are concerned. They have also mobilized the population for the promotion of democracy and good governance at the national and local levels.

- Fourthly, **without effective language policy it is not possible to promote literate environments in schools and communities**. The adoption of multilingual and multicultural education policies can influence the involvement of the publishing sector in the production of print materials in national languages. Namibia and Tanzania have eloquently shown that language policy is the most critical enticing factor for the development of a culture of reading and writing in national languages.

- The fifth recommendation that can be made is **the need to adopt a demand-driven approach which considers the literacy and educational needs of children and adults**. Literacy and basic education programs must be conceptualized by taking into account what people do with literacy and how they relate to it. They must also use a constructivist approach that recognizes that learners are knowledgeable individuals. They acquire new knowledge by taking into consideration what they already know. Here, relevance of literacy programs depends on their ability to implement relevant curricula that stimulate learning and thus produce better and relevant outcomes for the learners.

The relevance of curricula implies recognizing the diversity among learners and responding to diverse educational needs. Such an approach is crucial if girls and women's concerns are to be addressed by the literacy programs.

Often, lack of educational materials is advanced as one of the main problems related to quality instruction in literacy programs. Yes, one cannot deny the importance of reading materials for the acquisition of literacy skills. But we should move away from a primer-only reading approach to literacy approaches that use primers and influence the production of texts in the schools and communities. In Mali, for example, students are encouraged to become writers through the writing of "la mémoire de classe". These are short stories that children from first to six grades produce. They include stories about themselves, their families, their dreams and hopes, their communities, and also what they know about the outside world. Writing these stories is done as a process which teaches children all the various steps that are required for composing a text. This approach integrates holistically oral language development (story-telling, thinking before writing), and the development of writing and reading competence. More over speaking, writing and reading are language activities which

are done in social contexts. Therefore children learn their real purposes. A similar approach is promoted in REFLECT, an adult literacy program promoted in Uganda and Tanzania. This approach, based on Paolo Freire's philosophy, relates the development of literacy skills to the development of empowering strategies in adult education. It also includes a writing component that encourages adult learners to write their own stories. Therefore, participatory approaches which are learner-centered are fundamental pedagogical approaches that must be promoted in formal and non-formal education literacy programs.

- **In the information age, the integration of ICT into school and community literacy programs is crucial.** Children and adults in Africa are already using computers, cellular phones and radio to communicate locally, nationally and internationally. Even non-literate individuals use today these devices. It is inconceivable that educational programs ignore this development. South Africa is promoting ICTs in its literacy programs. Other African countries should learn from South Africa and find ways of integrating technologies and information management systems into their literacy programs.

- Finally, **financing at large scale is needed to adequately pay literacy teachers, curriculum specialists and literacy and adult education program developers. Funding is needed to develop professional development programs to build-capacity for literacy and adult education in Africa. Funding is also needed to implement the plans of action.** Here, the role of the international development agencies such as the World Bank and other multilateral and bilateral agencies is crucial. Investing in literacy must be viewed as a multi-pronged strategy for the promotion of basic education, for the alleviation of poverty, for combating HIV/AIDS, for the promotion of equality and social justice in African societies and for the promotion of human development. No country has been able to achieve a decent level of development without reaching a decent level of individual, communal and societal literacy. It is, therefore, very difficult for African countries to achieve an adequate level of development with the current state of literacy.

Appendix

Intergovernmental Conference
on Language Policies in Africa

Harare 1997

PLAN OF ACTION

The Plan proposes actions at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. It states the nature of each action as well as its objectives, targeted results, timeframe, and implementing bodies.

N°	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	RESULT TARGETED	TIMEFRAME	IMPLEMENTING BODIES
1	Defining Language Policies	Rehabilitating National languages	A precise, consistent language policy for each country (status – function)	Short term (1998-1999)	Each state
2	Language Management Plan	Implementation of the language policy	Typology and use of national languages in the various spheres of activities (politics, administration, literacy)	Short and medium term (1998-2000)	Each country
3	Setting up national structures	Creation and revitalisation of operational policy and technical structures for the implementation and direction of the Action Plan	The existence of functional structures (political, technical, pedagogical ...)	Short and medium term (1998-2000)	All countries
4	Language Atlas of Africa	Typology of African languages	An exhaustive inventory of all African languages and language areas	Medium term (2000-2002)	UNESCO, OAU, ACCT, other partners
5	Revitalising regional and sub-regional structures (CICIBA, EACROTANAL, CELTHO, etc.)	Effective involvement in the promotion of African languages	Rehabilitation of national and trans-national languages	Medium and long term (1999-2010)	Regional and sub-regional institutions and partners
6	Producing linguistic and didactic tools	Intensive production of linguistic tools and didactic material	The promotion of a reading environment in local, sub-regional and regional languages	Short, medium and long term	Countries, regional and sub-regional organisations, UNESCO and partners
7	Teaching of local, sub-regional and regional languages	Using these languages as media of instruction and teaching them	The mastery of knowledge and know-how, and the development of skills and identity by the actors involved in language reform and the target groups	Medium and long term	IDEM

			though these languages		
8	Literacy	The conduct of extensive literacy campaigns	Populations educated (in reading, writing, arithmetic) in the various African languages	Medium and long term	Countries, sub-regional and regional organizations, UNESCO, OAU and other partners
9	Regional and sub-regional cooperation Congress of the Panafrican Association of Linguistics	The promotion of national and transnational languages as tools for inter-African cooperation Create a panafrican association	The promotion of dynamic networks for multisectoral cooperation through transnational languages Contribute individually and collectively to the promotion of African languages	Medium and long term Short term	Countries, sub-regional and regional organisations OAU, UNESCO and ACCT
10	Follow-up and evaluation	Ensuring proper coordination of the activities and measuring their impact	Implementation of the language management plan and the Action Plan	Biennial	Countries, sub-regional and regional organizations, UNESCO, OAU and other partners

Source: *Appendix to the Final Report (revised 2002) of the 1997 Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, Harare at*
http://www.imo.hr/ocpa/resources/docs/hararedoc.pdf

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