

Module 17

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COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

Introduction to Key Concepts  
in Comparative Education

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THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

## **General Education Modules**

### **for Upper Primary and Junior Secondary School Teachers of Science, Technology and Mathematics by Distance in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)**

Developed by

The Southern African Development Community

Ministries of Education in:

- Botswana
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

In partnership with The Commonwealth of Learning

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## GENERAL EDUCATION MODULES

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This module is one of a series prepared under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and The Commonwealth of Learning as part of the Science, Technology and Mathematics Programme (STAMP 2000+). These General Education modules enable teachers to enhance their professional skills through distance and open learning. Many individuals and groups have been involved in writing and producing these modules. We trust that they will benefit not only the teachers who use them, but also, ultimately, their students and the communities and nations in which they live.

The eighteen General Education modules are as follows:

- Module 1: *Multigrade Teaching: Introduction to Multigrade Teaching*
- Module 2: *Multigrade Teaching: Classroom Organisation and Management*
- Module 3: *The Reading Process*
- Module 4: *Developing Reading Skills*
- Module 5: *Special Educational Needs: An Introduction to Teaching Traumatized Children*
- Module 6: *Special Educational Needs: A Practical Guide to Teaching Traumatized Children*
- Module 7: *Education Management Development: Part A*
- Module 8: *Education Management Development: Part B*
- Module 9: *Child Development*
- Module 10: *Concepts of Learning*
- Module 11: *An Introduction to Concepts in Language and Communication*
- Module 12: *Language and Communication: Language in Use*
- Module 13: *Curriculum Theory, Design and Assessment*
- Module 14: *Curriculum Practice*
- Module 15: *A Theoretical Framework on Innovations in Education*
- Module 16: *Effects of Social Changes on Education*
- Module 17: *Comparative Education: Introduction to Key Concepts in Comparative Education*
- Module 18: *Comparative Education: Themes and Trends in Comparative Education in SADC Countries*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

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Upper Primary Technology
- Hands-on Management Services (British Columbia, Canada):  
Junior Secondary Technology

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# COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

Introduction to Key Concepts  
in Comparative Education

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## COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

### Introduction to Key Concepts in Comparative Education

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Comparative education is a sub-discipline of pedagogy, which is the art and science of teaching. It began as a study of foreign education systems for the purpose of copying those characteristics that were admired and has evolved into the study of circumstances that influence education in a country, whether or not those circumstances have parallels in other regions. Studying other education systems can help us to find solutions to our own educational problems. However, we must bear in mind that every country's experience is unique, and so avoid copying uncritically another country's solutions.

To this end, we hope that this module will:

- Introduce comparative education as a sub-discipline of education studies.
- Introduce the key concepts of comparative education and the methods employed to study education systems.
- Give a general understanding of the structure of education systems and the forces that have shaped them.
- Apply the principles stated in the previous goals to the historical development of case studies in the SADC region.

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## LEARNING TIPS

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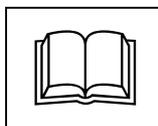
You will find the following tips helpful as you study this module.

- **Set aside some time each day to work on this module.** If possible, study at the same time and in the same place so you are comfortable with your study surroundings. Learning at a distance requires discipline and motivation.
- **Go through the module unit by unit.**
- **Note any words you do not understand.** Look them up in a dictionary or other reference source or discuss them with your colleagues.
- **Underline or highlight important passages.** Make summary notes in the margins of long passages. Writing will help you to remember the material. You may also choose to make diagrams that illustrate how different ideas are related or list the steps in a procedure or technique.
- As you work through this module, **keep in mind your learners and their educational needs** as well as your instructional goals and your subject matter. How will you apply what you are learning?
- Read the assignment instructions carefully. Then, **do all the self-assessment activities** before proceeding to the Suggested Answers section.
- **As you undertake each activity, relate it to the practice of teaching** and analyse how it will help you to enhance the teaching-learning situation. Always ask yourself how you could use this material.
- **Apply some of the suggested techniques to your teaching.** All suggestions may not be appropriate for your situation, but how will you know unless you try them? Keep a record of what techniques work and an explanation of why some techniques appeared to fail. What does not work now may work later with different students.
- It may be difficult, but try to **meet occasionally with other teachers** to discuss the content and application of suggestions provided in this module.
- If you experience difficulty in understanding some aspect of the module, do not despair! You are meant to be challenged. **Do not give up!** Just remember that your goal is to be the best teacher that you can be. Think of what you would tell a student who was experiencing difficulty in your classroom. Then, apply the same advice to yourself.

## ICONS

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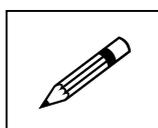
Throughout each module, you will find the following icons or graphic symbols that alert you to a change in activity within the module. Only the icons that are required are used in each module.



**Text or Reading Material:** provides information about the topics that are covered in a module. The subject matter for each SADC module is organised into units.



**Introductory Activity:** requires you to focus on the content that will be discussed in a unit.



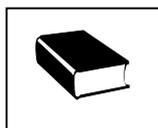
**Self-Assessment:** enables you to check your understanding of what you have read and, in some cases, to apply the information presented in the unit to new situations.



**Practice Activity:** encourages you to review and apply what you have learned before taking a unit test.



**Reflection:** asks you to relate what you have learned to your work as a teacher or education officer in your community.



**Summary:** highlights or provides an overview of the most important points covered in a unit.



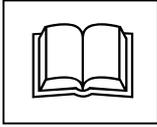
**Unit Test:** concludes each unit.



**Suggested Answers:** allow you to evaluate your learning by providing sample answers to assessments, activities and the unit test.

# UNIT 1: The Concept of Comparative Education

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## Introduction

Beginning a new field of study raises some basic questions. In this unit, we will address the following questions:

- What is comparative education?
- Why is comparative education studied?
- What does the student of comparative education do?
- What methods does the study use?

## Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define comparative education.
2. Analyse the methods used to gather, analyse and interpret information used in comparative education.
3. Explain why more than one method is used to gather information for comparative studies.

## What Is Comparative Education?

A society cannot exist in isolation. Therefore, every society has the responsibility to learn from other societies. Kelly (1986: 2) says:

The study of the systems of schooling in other countries is called **comparative education** and that very name suggests we are undertaking that study in order to compare what we find with what we know of our own system and thus be in a better position to make educational judgements.

Note that to compare is to notice similarities and differences. The purpose of comparative education is to inform decision making in education.

Comparative education draws upon the social sciences, education and cross-national studies. This suggests that it ties these together and uses their methods to gather, process and interpret information in order to help people make informed judgements and decisions.

Chaube and Chaube (1996: 22) add that:

Within comparative education, we now make analysis of education systems of various countries in order to understand their educational problems with a view to find out solutions for one's own educational problems.

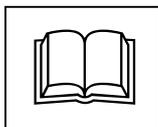
Note that this takes us a step further from merely making judgements towards doing something about weaknesses of our own education systems. Comparative education studies provide us with possible solutions that we could use to address our educational problems.



### **Self-Assessment 1**

1. Define comparative education by explaining:
  - what it is
  - what it does
  - its purposes.
2. List five aspects of the education system you think can be compared across two countries.

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



### **Beliefs in Comparative Education**

Comparative education has developed around certain key beliefs about education in general. These are:

- that education systems are responsible for social and economic differences between nations;
- that the education systems of one country can be organised along principles gained from the study of another;
- that the education system is closely related to the socio-economic environment; and
- that factors outside education influence the nature and outcomes of the education of the land. (Chaube and Chaube 1996: 18)

Do you share these beliefs? If you do, note that they are only beliefs. It is apparent that an education system cannot be imported, however good it may be. Altbach and Kelly (1986: 159) argue that:

Transplantation is a difficult art and those who wish to benefit from the experience of other countries will find in comparative studies a most useful set of cautions.

However, an accurate and reliable account of foreign education systems often shows that our problems are not unique. In some aspects, it shows that we are not doing badly.



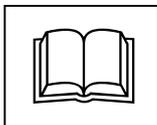
## Self-Assessment 2

Consider the table that relates to gender issues in education and answer the questions that follow the table.

| <b><i>Females as a Percentage of Total Enrolment</i></b> |                    |                    |                    |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b><i>Country</i></b>                                    | <b><i>1960</i></b> | <b><i>1970</i></b> | <b><i>1983</i></b> |
| Botswana   | 59                 | 53                 | 53                 |
| Lesotho  | 62                 | 60                 | 58                 |
| Mozambique   | 38                 | 34                 | 43                 |
| Swaziland  | 50                 | 49                 | 50                 |
| Zambia   | 40                 | 45                 | 47                 |
| Zimbabwe   | 45                 | 45                 | 48                 |

1. Which countries have a similar trend?
2. What is the major difference between trends in Botswana and Zambia?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Another important contribution of comparative education is related to standards. Employers and colleges speak of the equivalence of qualifications. “What qualification is equivalent to ‘O’ level?” is a question that is being asked by those who offer local examinations. Comparative education can also be used to make a case for or against given educational practices.

Education is considered a basic human right. Therefore, human rights organisations seek to identify disparities based on gender, region, race or tribe. To do so, they need comparative data.

Furthermore, there are many misconceptions in education that can be tested by examining the experiences of other countries. How often do you hear people saying qualifications from universities of one country are weaker than those from another? Are these not mere generalisations? One cannot base decision making on them. You need to make informed decisions, not guesses. Information is more useful if it is gathered and manipulated in a systematic manner. To do so, comparative education uses a number of methods. Let us now turn to these methods.

## Methods of Study in Comparative Education

There are a number of methods of study in comparative education. This unit considers the quantitative, descriptive, sociological, historical, analytical and synthetic methods. The usefulness of each method depends on the objectives of a particular study.

### **The Quantitative/Statistical Method**

By now, you are aware that comparative education gathers information from the education systems of different countries. You are also aware that the study analyses the information gathered, noting similarities, differences, problems, successes and the underlying factors of all the above. Therefore, by **method**, we are referring to the approach or the means of gathering and presenting information.

The **quantitative method**, as the name suggests, deals with numbers. Below is the key vocabulary of **statistics**, which is the science of collecting and analysing numerical data.

| <b>Statistical Terms</b> |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Term</b>              | <b>Meaning</b>   |
| Population               | A group of people or things  |
| Sample                   | Part of the group above  |
| Data                     | Facts and figures collected by counting and measurement                      |
| Variable                 | Any measures, qualities or attitudes which vary                              |
| Distribution             | The spread of variables, attitudes or measures over the population or sample |

In addition, you need to be familiar with the stages in statistical inquiry:

- P – pose a question.
- C – collect data.
- A – analyze data.
- I – interpret the data.

The quantitative method is a scientific approach. This is both its strength and its weakness. Systematic and logical practices may produce plausible and objective information. It is, however, difficult to get reliable data. Some countries and

schools may not collect the type of information you may need. This method also fails to take into account the value system of a country. Chaube and Chaube (1996: 12) say that “educational terms used in different countries do not connote the same sense”. It is also true that different terms are used to denote the same thing. Think about the ‘hot-seating system’ in Zimbabwe, the ‘double session’ system in Botswana and ‘the platoon system’ in Namibia. These are all terms for the same thing. Note that terms used by teachers may be different from those used by the government. Think of other terms that mean different things to different educators.

Nevertheless, when accurate statistics are available, numerical data can be more reliable than other forms of information used in comparative studies.

### ***Descriptive Method***

This method, as implied, gathers information and describes education systems of different countries. This method is more flexible than the quantitative method. It also describes all those factors, such as politics and economics, which influence the education system.

Certain criteria must be set for the information produced by this method. For example, you may consider accuracy and reliability, as well as whether the descriptions are based on a representative sample.

### ***Historical Method***

This method studies modern education systems against a background of their historical development. As you know, African countries have been influenced by missionary and colonial forms of education. The historical method therefore traces the past in order to explain the present and plan the future.

The major weakness is that historical information can be hard to obtain. Often historical accounts are inaccurate. Even information from comparative education books of the past can be misleading. For example, Hans (1940: 20) concludes, “The black population of Africa has neither national traditions nor a national language.” To what extent is this statement accurate?

### ***Sociological Method***

This method draws upon sociology. It studies education systems in a social context. Philip and Kelly (1986: 15) conclude, “Schools can rise no higher than communities that support them.” Do you agree? Maybe you do not. You may argue that some schools develop as a result of individual contributions or that others are externally funded by donors. This is the limitation of the sociological method. The other weakness is **ethnocentrism**, the tendency to judge the world from the observer’s own value system. The sociological method

is still useful, however. To minimise the weakness of the methods discussed to this point, comparative educationists have developed methods that strengthen and incorporate all the methods above.

### **Analytical Method**

The analytical method captures information about factors considered to be influencing the education system. These factors may include economic, social, geographical and political trends. Data is collected by both descriptive and statistical methods and then interpreted by historical and sociological analysis. Finally, a common standard is applied to compare education systems under study and conclusions are drawn.

### **Synthesis**

This method is influenced by the belief that some universal similarities can be observed in the study of education systems. International organisations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the Commonwealth of Nations, use this method extensively. An example of its application will be given later.

In practice, synthesis applies all the methods that we have discussed but emphasises the discovery of similarities within the differences in education systems. For example, although our education systems may differ from country to country in the SADC region, our needs and aspirations are probably the same across the region.



### **Practice Activity**

1. Explain the quantitative method.
2. Criticise the historical method.
3. List the uses of comparative education.
4. Gather data on enrolment, transition rates and pass rates by gender from two urban and two rural schools in your country. Then,
  - calculate and compare drop-out rates, and
  - suggest reasons for differences between schools.

List the kind of information you would gather to inform decision making relative to the equitable distribution of educational inputs such as teachers, textbooks and classrooms. What factors do you think have led to the current situation?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



## Summary

This unit has discussed the meaning, methods and purpose of comparative education. You can now answer the basic questions raised at the beginning of the unit. We reviewed the following methods for collecting and analysing comparative education data: quantitative or statistical method, descriptive method, historical method, sociological method, analytical method and synthesis. With this information, you should be able to proceed through the rest of the module without difficulties.

In the following units, you will consider factors that influence education, the characteristics of a national education system and other themes in comparative education.



## Unit Test

1. Read the passage below, then answer the questions that follow it.

Every year at this time of the year (January) a great number of Zambians undergo a traumatic experience that affects their individual lives. It is this time of the year that we witness a great mass of leaders of tomorrow, the youths, suddenly becoming the paupers of tomorrow. They are the so-called dropouts...The school system as it is at present turns out every year youths who can only read and write English but are unproductive. What the present system is producing are gangs of half-educated savages and thieves. Not because they want it that way, but because they have no other means of survival in the cruel world.

*(Sunday Times of Zambia, 25 January, 1976, in Hoppers, 1981)*

- a. What aspects of the education system are being questioned in this article?
  - b. What information would you gather to make a case in favour of the point of view of the author?
  - c. What methods would you apply to conduct a comparative study that deals with issues raised by this article?
2. List factors that influence education systems in the SADC region.
  3. Define the term 'ethnocentrism'.

Possible answers to the test are provided at the end of this unit.



## Suggested Answers

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### Self-Assessment 1

1. Comparative education is an applied study that compares education systems of foreign countries in order to discover similarities and differences and thus inform decision making and practices in education.
2. Below are a few aspects of an education system that could be compared across two countries:
  - enrolment
  - number of schools
  - drop-out rates
  - graduation rates
  - curriculum
  - educational policies
  - funds spent on education.

### Self-Assessment 2

1. The enrolment of females increased slightly in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The enrolment decreased in Lesotho and Botswana.
2. Female enrolment in Botswana is decreasing, while in Zambia it is increasing.

### Practice Activity

1. The quantitative method, as the name suggests, describes education in terms of numerical or statistical data.
2. The historical method suffers from a lack of reliable information from the past. Record keeping in Africa is problematical. There is also the risk of being influenced by biased recorded history.
3. Comparative education is used to provide:
  - deeper understanding of one's own education;
  - an understanding of our past, which is used to establish our present and make policies for the future;
  - an opportunity to estimate standards; and
  - knowledge that our problems are not unique.
4. The answer to this activity will vary and therefore no suggested answer can be given. Note, however, that in order to distribute educational resources such as teachers, textbooks and classrooms, you need to know the number of schools, the number of pupils in each school, the subjects

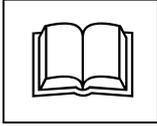
being taught in the schools and the number of pupils per subject.

### **Unit Test**

1. a. The article is questioning the curriculum that produces educated but unskilled people. The curriculum must be more practically oriented so that graduates can get jobs.
  - b. Information needed to make a case should relate to:
    - enrolment figures
    - the number of people who graduate
    - the number of people who get jobs after leaving school
    - the drop-out rates
    - nature of curricula
    - availability of teaching resources
    - job opportunities and training needs.
  - c. Methods to use may be:
    - historical
    - quantitative
    - descriptive.
2. Factors influencing education in the SADC countries may include:
    - colonial legacy
    - multiplicity of languages
    - economics.
  3. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view other cultures from the perspective of our own and consequently wrongly judge other people's culture or behaviour.

# UNIT 2: Physical, Economic and Social Factors Affecting Education Systems

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## Introduction

Now that you understand what is meant by comparative education, you are ready to examine those factors that influence a national education system. This unit will address these questions:

- What factors affect education systems?
- How do they affect the education system?
- Which factor has the strongest influence on the education system in your area?

You will need to gather material about your local area in order to answer these questions fully.

## Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe factors that affect an education system.
2. Illustrate how each factor affects your education system.

## Effects of Geography on Education Systems

According to Chaube and Chaube (1996: 3):

The various countries of the world have different geographical positions. Therefore, their modes of living, civilisation, culture, social institutions and education systems are also different.

Geography affects every sphere of life and in many ways shapes the lives of a people. You can probably appreciate how this applies in your own areas.

Consider how the main economic activity of your area has been affected by the climate and the landscape. If you are in a very dry area with few rivers or lakes, the chances are high that the area is sparsely populated and the economic activity would be minimal. Thus, there are limits on how much money could be raised to support educational activities. However, the educational needs may not be substantial, as fewer people would live in these areas.

If you live in a mining area, the economy may be quite strong. Many people could find work. Raising educational funds would not be a major issue. However, it would be important to include more practical courses in the curriculum, as well as subjects such as geography, science and mathematics. Agricultural courses would probably have low enrolments in such areas. Thus, climate and geography affect the community, which makes specific demands on the education system.

## Effects of Economic Activity on Education Systems

Education in a particular location must complement these activities that sustain that community. How do people in your area make a living? Which subjects does your school offer that prepare children for those occupations?

Economic activities are interdependent; we rely on others to buy our products and sell us those we do not make ourselves. That is a very simple model. However, economic systems make different demands on their citizens, thus countries have different education systems to meet their needs.

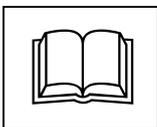
For instance, let us examine a subsistence economy, which is an economy dominated by people who produce only enough to sustain themselves, and no more for resale. While it is unlikely that we will find many communities in the SADC region that are purely subsistence, we have 'peasant' communities that are unable to produce much for sale.



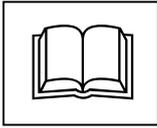
### Self-Assessment 1

1. Why might subsistence farmers not favour formal education?
2. Is the quotation below out of date?

It is axiomatic to state that where there is a subsistence economy – that is, one in which people are just able to make ends meet – then education must be informal, occurring on the job. (Mallinson, 1966: 29)



Obviously, the size and strength of the economy affects the amount of money available for the government to spend on education. In the late nineties, we witnessed a rapid expansion in education in Botswana because of its rapidly growing economy. During the same period, Zimbabwe faced a crisis after rapidly expanding its education system. Its economy has stagnated in the late nineties. There are fears that Zimbabwe's economy can no longer support its education system. This line of argument is forcefully pursued by critics of Zimbabwean education policy. How does the general economic environment affect spending on your schools?



## Effects of Race Relations on Education Systems

One of the most extreme examples of the effects of poor race relations on an education system was during apartheid in South Africa. In 1954, Verwoed, the Minister of Native Affairs, said:

The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community.... There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour.... For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed.  
(Harber, 1989: 184)

Clearly, the belief that one race was superior to another had profound consequences for the education of African children. Examine the table below that indicates the amount of funds spent to educate children of specific racial groups.

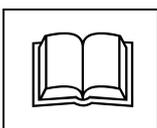
| <b>Government Spending on Education<br/>in South Africa, 1984 (Harber, 1989: 185)</b> |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Racial Group</b>   | <b>Amount Spent per Child</b> |
| White pupils  | 1654 R                        |
| Indian pupils   | 1088 R                        |
| Coloured pupils   | 569 R                         |
| African pupils  | 234 R                         |



### Self-Assessment 2

1. Examine the table on government spending on education in South Africa. What were the likely effects of these levels of spending on the quality of schools for each group?
2. How else did apartheid affect the education of African children? You might consider in your answer the content of what was taught during the apartheid era.

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Apartheid was a form of segregation; it attempted to keep the races separate and it treated them differently. Whites-only schools had superior facilities, while so-called Bantu schools provided inferior education.

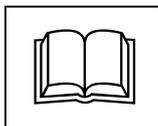
The effect of poor race relations need not be so pronounced. While one group may not be denied access to education, it might still be discriminated against. Perhaps governments of today will redress past injustices.



## Reflection

Are there minority groups in your community who are discriminated against?

They may not be different races but different language groups. What is your government's response?



## Effects of Religion on Education Systems

Religion is one such factor which has influenced education more than any other single factor. (Sodhi, 1983: 25)

The religion one chooses to follow can determine whether one's children go to school or not. For instance, in Zimbabwe some members of the Apostolic Faith sect refuse to allow their children to go to school at all. They contend that the world will soon end, so there is no point being concerned about earthly considerations; it is far better to direct one's attention heavenwards. Needless to say, non-attendance at school has profound implications for an education system.

Non-attendance is not the only form of opposition available to religious groups. Many religious groups support education, but only a form they find acceptable. The large Christian denominations, which have their own schools, can challenge the power of the state by refusing to accept government policies.

At this point, we might like to consider apartheid policies in South Africa. The policy of making Afrikaans the medium of tuition sparked a student revolt without parallel in 1976. Ironically, in the same year as these riots, the Catholic Church decided to open its previously segregated schools to children of all races. That marked the beginning of a decade of resistance to the educational policies of the apartheid government.

Religious opposition can be particularly dangerous for educational policy makers. Not only are some religious groups broadly based, but their hold over people can be particularly strong. When the state comes into conflict with a church, that church's opposition can be a matter of conscience and therefore compromise can be almost impossible.

Religious groups are obviously vitally interested in the school curriculum because they want to ensure that what is taught to children does not conflict with their beliefs. You may have experienced opposition from religious groups to the teaching of evolution or sex education. For example, the Catholic Church believes that sex education should be taught by the Church and not the schools. Many similar examples indicate that

religious groups can strongly influence what is taught in schools. Their influence varies from community to community.

## Effects of Different Languages on Education Systems

If your mother tongue is not the medium of communication in your local schools, your situation is not uncommon. In fact, this is very often the case in the SADC region.

Language policy for education systems in the SADC region is of vital importance because language is considered to be:

- **a vehicle of advancement**, since mastery of a foreign language like English or French gives the speaker access to the knowledge and technical expertise of developed countries; or
- **a weapon of cultural annihilation**, since languages are the most important element in cultural identity.

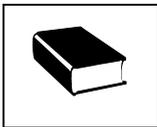
Striking a balance between these conflicting views of language is an urgent problem for educational planners.

Language is also considered vital for preserving national unity. The question is, whose language should be promoted?



### Self-Assessment 3

Which do you think has a greater impact on education – language or religion? Explain your answer.



### Summary

When we consider education systems, the effects of geographical, economic and social factors cannot be separated from each other. You have seen how the economic activities undertaken by a community depend on the available resources. In turn, the place where people live and the economic activities of the community in which they live determine its culture. An education system is a cultural product, so it cannot fail to be influenced by these factors.

It should be borne in mind that the current boundaries of African countries were created by colonial powers for their own benefit. The boundaries of nations are artificial; therefore, educational planners must be very careful when they devise language policies.



### Reflection

How do geographical, economic and social factors affect your pupils' and their parents' attitudes towards the following:

- school attendance
- the curriculum, especially moral and religious education
- sex education
- the language which is the medium of instruction
- African languages taught.



## Unit Test

Read the following extract from *Soweto's Children*:

These Zionists beat drums every blessed Friday night until Saturday morning and we students are supposed to concentrate on our studies. When there are no Zionists the Sangoma (the medicine man) and his numerous deputies make another nerve racking noise and strange odours of different herbs fill the night air. (Geber & Newman, 1980: 42)

1. a. What types of religious groups are mentioned here?  
b. The student is complaining about the insensitivity of religious groups. Why do you think these groups do not take into consideration the student's need for quiet?
2. Discuss the impact religion can have on education.
3. How might the economies of the following affect educational spending?
  - a. Angola
  - b. South Africa
  - c. Malawi
4. In areas that survive on cattle rearing, often the boys' responsibilities revolve around cattle herding. How might this affect school attendance?
5. Why is language policy a sensitive issue in former colonies?

Answers to this test are provided at the end of this unit.



## Suggested Answers

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### Self-Assessment 1

1. Subsistence farmers may not be in favour of formal education because the labour of children in the fields or at home is necessary for the family's survival.
2. Yes the quotation is outdated, as it is now compulsory for children to go to school.

### Self-Assessment 2

1. Since significantly less money was spent on the education of African children, their facilities were poor and they lacked qualified, trained teachers.
2. The curriculum tried to reinforce the perception that non-White races were inferior. This led to self-esteem problems as non-White children limited their potential.

### Self-Assessment 3

The answer to this question will depend on your point of view. There is no doubt that religion and language have a significant affect on what goes on in the classroom. Religion can affect who goes to school and the subjects taught in class. However, language may have the stronger influence, as it affects everything that goes on in the classroom. Depending on the language used, one can open up education to everyone or restrict it. Language also makes it possible for students to have access to new ideas and different points of view.

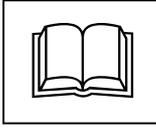
### Unit Test

1. a. Zionists and traditional animists are the religious groups mentioned in the question.  
b. Either they are ignorant of the student's need for silence or believe the act of worship is more important than inconvenience to others.
2. Religion may have a significant impact on the education system.
  - It can determine whether children go to school or not. Members of the Apostolic Faith do not send their children to school.
  - It can affect what is taught in schools. Catholics, for example, prefer that sex education not be taught in schools and other religions object to evolutionary theory being taught.

- It can lead to the establishment of a separate school system with its own rules.
  - Religious groups may compete with the government for funding for education.
3.
    - a. Angola's economy has been ravaged by war and large amounts of money are directed to the war effort. War damage has reduced its productivity.
    - b. South Africa is a large economy and therefore has more money to spend on education. However, it has a larger population so its burden is greater.
    - c. Malawi is more under-developed than many economies, so it has less money to spend on education.
  4. It might sometimes be necessary to miss school in order to herd cattle.
  5. Often a foreign language was imposed as a means of weakening the cultural identity of local people. Language is seen by some as vital for cultural survival.

# UNIT 3: Political Factors Affecting Education Systems

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## Introduction

You have already studied physical, economic and social factors that affect education systems. However, they do not work in isolation. We have seen how geography affects economics and how both of these factors affect the type of society that develops in an area.

Societies have aspirations. The expression of these aspirations is politics.

At every level and from every perspective,  
education and politics are closely interlinked.  
(Kelly, 1986: 19)

In this unit, you will examine how people's aspirations, once put into concrete form, affect an education system. Whether we look at a large political party that dominates national government or an interest group at the village level, the influence of politics is unavoidable. We will review nationalism, socialism, capitalism and humanism and some of their effects upon the education system.

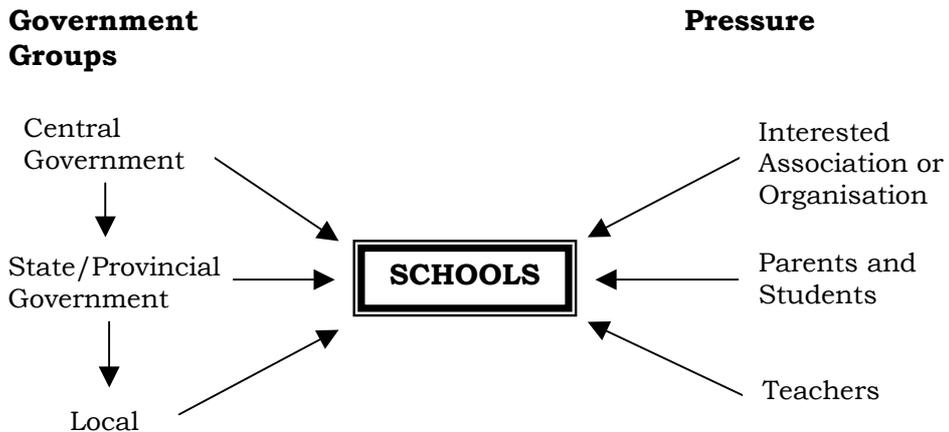
## Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Classify different political units.
2. Assess the relative impact of political units on education systems.
3. Evaluate whether the influence of these political units on education is good or bad or both.

## Political Influences on Schools

### *The Government and Pressure Groups*



In this model, the arrows represent the influence of the different political groups on school life. For instance, there are three levels of government that may affect schools. This may not be the case in your country or area. The central government can implement its decisions through its headquarters, which usually pass its decisions for implementation to smaller branches of the government.

Think about who makes the decision to build a government school in your area. Does your national government make the decision to build a school in your area or does your local or district council have the autonomy to make that decision? Where does the money come from to build that school? Sometimes it comes from the central government, but it may be given to the local government to implement that decision.

Whichever level of government is involved, governments reserve the right to control or at least influence the subjects and pupils taught in school, according to national, regional or local interests.

Government is not the only provider of education. Church groups build schools and so do secular groups, such as wealthy parents. These groups may also want to control what and who is taught in their school and the instructional methods used. The government might feel compelled to intervene to protect what it might see as the interests of the larger community or nation.

Groups that do not build or control schools might feel some part of government policy is unacceptable. They also will seek to influence the education system in order to achieve their objectives. They may protest, refuse to send their children to school or refuse to cooperate with school authorities.

Aspirations, the desire for change or to preserve the past, eventually lead people to develop an ideology. An **ideology** has three elements:

- A unifying perception of what may be right or wrong with society.
- A common belief in what is right or good.
- A programme or plan that either restores order or implements change.

## The Role of Ideologies

Throughout history the kind and amount of education given has depended on the waxing or waning of this or that political outlook or belief. (Vernon Mallinson, 1966: 41)

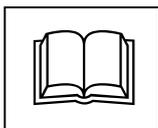
Quite naturally, if a political party gains power it wants the education system to be consistent with its ideology. Education is seen as serving a purpose, which is to support or at least not undermine key values of the political party or movement that has gained power. Thus, the government controlled by that political movement or party will institute programmes it feels are necessary 'for the good of the nation'.



### Self-Assessment 1

1. After independence in Zimbabwe, concerned parents built schools that charge high fees. Because it is costly for parents to send their children to these schools, the population of these schools is mostly White. Why might this state of affairs concern the government?
2. a. Name one pressure group you know in your country that wants to affect school policy.  
b. What are its aspirations?
3. Which type of pressure group might be most concerned with the following:
  - a. school prayer
  - b. teachers' salaries
  - c. corporal punishment in the school.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



### Nationalism

It is accepted that the concept of nationalism has been the strongest force in shaping state controlled systems of education, but also it determines the aims, content, character of

education and sometimes its methods of instruction. (Mallinson, 1966: 269)

The SADC region was colonised by European powers. Nationalist movements arose in countries of the SADC region as a reaction against colonialism. Nationalists seek to preserve their identity, defend their national sovereignty and develop national sentiments, especially when they are threatened by foreign powers. Quite naturally, if nationalists gain power they will seek to redress injustices and consequently the education system will be designed to further nationalist aims.

Obviously, there are many changes that a government could introduce to enable it to further its nationalist aims. This is the comment of the National Education Review Commission of Swaziland (1985):

The introduction of Siswati into the curriculum provided an even better opportunity for the teaching of Swazi culture. Siswati in schools should not be handled just as a language, the elements of culture should be brought in. This is where the opportunity arises for pupils to be taught Swazi ceremonies, folklore, folktales and all other aspects of the Swazi way of life. (National Education Review Commission of Swaziland, 1985: 14)

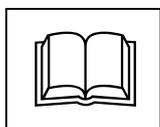
Language policy is an obvious way of furthering nationalism; however, it is not the only one.



## Self-Assessment 2

1. What aspects of school routines could be used to further nationalist sentiments?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



## Socialism

Of all the political movements of the recent past, socialism has been the most coherent. Whether its followers have diligently applied its principles or not is a matter for debate. However, socialists broadly agree on what the state should do.

We might consider the example of the Zimbabwe Socialists, who believe that education can be used as a tool to transform society. During the 1980s, the Zimbabwean government attempted to change the school curriculum so that some of its socialist aims could be realised.

The school was expected to inculcate the essential tenets of the national ideology of Marxist-Leninist socialism. ... A subject called political economy was introduced with an appropriate syllabus and materials.... The subject was to focus on models of production, class struggles, capitalism and imperialism, under-development and case studies of world capitalist and socialist states. (Gatawa, 1990: 51)

However, in his review of educational reform in Zimbabwe, *Quality- Quantity Dilemma in Education*, Gatawa tells us why political education was never introduced.

The objection against the subject was that it was anti-God and communist propaganda.... It demonstrated that the state does not have a free hand in education although it pays the bill. (Gatawa, 1991: 51)

In fact, the churches were bitterly opposed to the new subject, political economy. The churches form very powerful pressure groups and this was an example of an educational policy being influenced and finally determined by a group that was not part of the government. However, as the orientation of the government changed through the early nineties, socialism appeared to be less important. How do you think the decline of the Eastern Bloc countries in Europe affected the socialist governments in Africa?

As socialist ideologies collapsed around the world, Zimbabwe came under pressure to reverse its economic policies as capitalist systems gained supremacy. It was highly unlikely that political economy would have survived, even if it could have overcome religious opposition, because increasingly through the nineties socialist rhetoric could not match social reality.

## **Capitalism and Liberal Democracy**

Capitalism cannot be called an ideology. However, support for capitalist economic principles is common among many political parties all over the world.

As a socialist government, the Zimbabwean government promised free primary education. However, it was discovered that the government could not afford to sustain such a commitment and therefore reintroduced fees. In many spheres of life, subsidies were removed and the principle of the user paying for the cost of goods and services returned.

Many capitalist countries are called liberal democracies. Many liberal democracies claim they:

- protect basic human rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of thought;
- promote an open society; and
- defend free enterprise.

**Free enterprise** refers to an economic system. The state allows individuals or groups to devise their own means of sustaining themselves, through either business or employment, and intervenes in their affairs as little as possible. The state claims it wants to develop citizens who have the initiative to compete with others and sustain themselves. The purpose of education is not to develop obedience to the state, but to develop a free-thinking citizenry.

## Humanism

Humanism has a long tradition, dating back to the end of the Middle Ages in Europe. During the Middle Ages, the church dominated life. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, men of science began to question the church's view of the world. They wanted to put humans at the centre of all enquiry and learning, not God, thus freeing society from superstitions that had retarded the growth of science and learning.

Zambia is a former British colony. The life of the people was dominated by their colonial experience. The rulers were foreigners and what they did shaped society. In some ways, Zambians became mentally colonised, accepting that what was European was best. Do you think this happened in your country? For instance, think about how certain fashions might be evidence of mental colonisation.

The then President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, published his views in *Humanism in Zambia*. His 'watershed speech' in 1975 gave humanism a socialist direction. One important element in this ideological shift was the expansion of education (Harber, 1991: 190-192). If Zambians were to be 'decolonised', then an ideal vehicle through which to do it was secondary education. In 1975, a draft report by a reform group in the Ministry of Education had two key proposals:

- to extend educational opportunities to all children, and
- to incorporate political education in Socialist Humanism in all programmes (Harber, 1991: 191).

More than 42 000 copies of this draft were circulated in 1976. In Zambia, an elite urban group had developed. They were highly educated and feared that if educational opportunity spread, they would lose their privileged position. This group was hostile to the draft report, and a number of them worked in the Ministry of Education. In the final report published in 1977, the proposals quoted above were not adopted. The prime

movers of the report, the Minister of Education, Permanent Secretary and Assistant Permanent Secretary, were replaced.



### Self-Assessment 3

1. How might the provision of universal education, where access to education had previously been restricted, further socialist aims?
2. Name three basic human rights that are typically defended by liberal democracies.
3. What is the key ingredient of humanism?



### Summary

An education system cannot pretend to be divorced from politics. Politics is the outward expression of a people's desires and aspirations. Education can satisfy some of those aspirations. There is no single issue more important than how one's children grow up. Therefore, one of the most important political battlegrounds will always be the education system.



### Reflection

Which ideology is the strongest in your area? How has it affected education?



### Unit Test

1. Why might nationalists and socialists prefer free education?
2. a. Which country tried to introduce political economy in the late 1980s?  
b. What was the purpose of that change?  
c. Which pressure group opposed this change and why?  
d. Why do you think this pressure group was successful?
3. Swaziland is described as relatively homogeneous, meaning most of its inhabitants are ethnically Swazi. Why might a language policy like the Swazi policy not work elsewhere?
4. a. Briefly explain humanism in the Zambian context.  
b. Which group opposed educational reform in Zambia in 1976?  
c. Why did it oppose the reform programme?  
d. What was the outcome?



## Suggested Answers

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### Self-Assessment 1

1. The government wants to control or strongly influence the school's activities. If it did not pay for the school, then it might be difficult to control it. Further, a school that caters primarily to White children will not be favoured by those who feel that everyone should have reasonable access to education. The school may also reflect an elitist attitude that may differ from the nationalistic attitude being promoted by the government.
2.
  - a. Possible answers include a church group opposition party or a parent-teachers' association.
  - b. Depending on which pressure group you identified, the aspiration will match its area of concern. For example, teachers' unions are concerned with conditions in the schools.
3.
  - a. school prayer – church groups
  - b. teachers' salaries – teachers' unions
  - c. corporal punishment – human rights groups, parents, children

### Self-Assessment 2

1. The following routines could be used to further nationalism:
  - a. assemblies – singing the national anthem, saluting the flag and reciting the oath of allegiance
  - b. instruction in culture – specific lessons which may cover topics such as history, beliefs and folktales
  - c. language policy – promoting particular languages to enhance cultural awareness

### Self-Assessment 3

1. Socialists believe that education can be used as a tool to transform society. If everyone has access to education, transformation to a socialist society can occur more rapidly. Education is also part of the social welfare agenda of socialists.
2. The three basic rights that are usually defended by liberal democracies are freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of thought.
3. Humanists believe that humans, not God, are the centre of all enquiry and learning.

## Unit Test

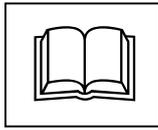
1. Nationalists might favour free education because it is universal; therefore, more children can be reached and encouraged to develop nationalist sentiments such as love of country.

Socialists believe that the purpose of the state is to extend social welfare provisions as far as possible. They also believe that education should be used as a means of social control; therefore, they need everyone to be a part of the system.

2. a. Zimbabwe tried to introduce political economy in the late 1980s.  
b. The purpose was to develop a socialist outlook in people.  
c. The churches opposed this change because they thought it was anti-God.  
d. The churches were powerful because they had many followers and the government feared it would become very unpopular if it antagonised an institution that was very important in the lives of the people.
3. In other countries, there are many language groups; therefore, it is more difficult to impose one language. When you try to impose one language, which one do you select? What criteria will you use? Who will be at a disadvantage if that particular language is chosen?
4. a. Zambian humanism tried to decolonise the minds of Zambians who accepted European ideas of what is good. It wanted to replace colonial values with a love of indigenous thought and culture.  
b. The educated urban elite opposed education reform.  
c. They feared losing their privileged position in society.  
d. The reform programme was dropped.

# UNIT 4: Effect of Traditional Education on Formal Education Systems

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## Introduction

In the last two units, we have referred to the education system. We have not described it as formal. Why is it necessary to introduce the word 'formal' now? Traditional African education is a system of education in its own right. It continues to exert a powerful influence on the formal system.

In this unit, we will establish what is meant by traditional African education and how it affects the formal system.

## Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Differentiate between formal and traditional education systems.
2. Identify persistent features of traditional African education that affect formal systems.
3. Analyse the effect of traditional systems on formal education systems.
4. Define those features that have a positive effect.
5. Highlight those that have a negative effect.

## What Is Traditional African Education?

In Botswana, young people are often required to attend an initiation ceremony called the 'Bogwera'. It marks a rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood. In some ways, it can be likened to a graduation ceremony.

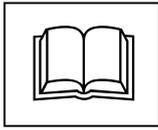
Although the Bogwera is a notable event, it is only part of a wider pattern of education. Nevertheless, according to Data (1987: 2), "...some missionaries in Africa believed that they were bringing education to entirely uneducated peoples. ..."



## Introductory Activity

Why do you think missionaries thought that there was no education in Africa?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



In a traditional system, the community does not have a written language. This type of system is called 'informal', implying that it is unstructured. The children simply mature; they are not explicitly taught.

By comparison, a formal system of education is supposed to be complex. The common perception of this type of education is that it requires experts and children to be brought together and provided with equipment and facilities. In other words, this is school learning. We begin to judge the quality of a system not by its product, a well-adjusted adult, but by its level of complexity.

In your own case, when someone mentions education, what comes to your mind?

### **Goals of Traditional African Education**

The goals of this type of education are:

- preservation of the cultural heritage of the family and community;
- capacity building, so that the individual can control and use his or her environment; and
- integration by understanding the laws, values, beliefs and language on which the future of the community depends.

Such goals cannot be realised by chance. For instance, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is considered so important that boys and girls are gathered together for instruction in the Bogwera and other initiation ceremonies in other parts of our region.

Maybe people still attend initiation ceremonies in your area or you may know someone who belongs to a group that practices initiation or did so in the recent past. Think about the activities of such ceremonies and how they are similar to formal education.

### **Teaching Practices and Devices of Traditional African Education**

Like any formal system, traditional African education uses a number of methods and devices to realise its aims. Here are a few:

- **Imitative games.** For example, Zulu boys sometimes play ngcweka in which they fight mock battles; thus they teach each other how to fight. Interestingly, peer status secured in these games is carried into adulthood, just like a certificate gained at school confers status on the holder today.

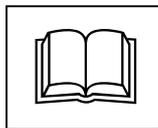
- **Guided imitative games.** For example, Plateau Tonga girls of Zambia play mantoombwa. They build huts outside the village and practise what they have been taught at home. When mothers release their daughters from their chores, they may give them salt and meat or vegetables for mantoombwa. The girl brings her cooked food home. Her mother tastes her ‘assignment’ and ‘grades’ it by praising it or criticising it.
- **Apprenticeships** allow children to learn from their parents or other adults. They focus primarily on the development of practical skills. The teacher/pupil ratio is very low, no doubt the envy of teachers in the formal systems, as they will never be able to match it.
- **Storytelling** is often used by specialist teachers with profound knowledge of the deeper issues of culture. Consider the attention span of children who listen to these stories. Storytelling is a skill primary and lower secondary school teachers could use quite profitably.



### Self-Assessment 1

1. Why do we use apprenticeships to learn certain trades?
2. Which activities could be best taught in traditional communities?

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



**Riddles and proverbs** are designed to sharpen the mind and give moral training. Although recent changes have made it difficult for parents and the community to use these devices, riddles and proverbs maintain a tenacious hold over the imagination. For example, there are many proverbs that give sound advice on child development. Here are a few:

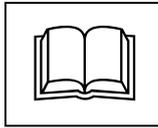
- “Mbudzi kudya mufenje hufananyina” (Shona, Zimbabwe), “A small pot is like a big pot.”
- “Ogotywa uselula” (isiXhosa, South Africa), “A skin is folded while it is still wet.” In other words, teach children while they are still receptive.
- “Uunona kaveshi iitenga yanasha” (Oshiwamleo, Namibia), “Children are not empty mugs.”
- “Munwe umo suipaya inda” (Nsenga, Zambia), “One thumb cannot kill a louse,” advice on unity.
- “Abantwana bensimba bahamba belandelana” (Isindebele, Zimbabwe), “The young cats walk along following each other,” advice on cooperation.



## Self-Assessment 2

List five riddles or proverbs from your own heritage. Evaluate their meaning. Are the messages still true today or are they out-of-date?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



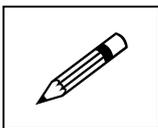
## Educational Outcomes

In a formal system, success is often measured statistically by examination results. Regions can be compared with regions, even states with states, so that by this statistical method education systems can be directly compared.

Traditional African education does not keep statistics, but according to Farrant (1991: 30):

There are no drop-outs, because steps are taken to ensure that promotion from one stage to the next in the child's education is not based on selection but is automatic.

This does not imply that promotion is automatic! On the contrary, traditional African education ensured that children were properly integrated into their communities by learning the necessary skills in sequence.



## Self-Assessment 3

1. When might the services of a 'specialist teacher' be required in traditional African education?
2. Why was the mantombwa game described as being guided?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



## Points of Contact

**Comprehensiveness versus Exclusiveness.** Traditional African education is comprehensive, as it permeates every sphere of life, while formal education demands exclusive rights over the child during school hours. What happens when a child must attend an initiation ceremony while school is in session? Is there a conflict between formal and informal systems?

**Different World Views.** Traditional African education concentrates on norms, values and beliefs, whereas formal education emphasises intellectual development. What happens

when a child does not assimilate both types of lessons? He or she may be unable to grasp the culture of his or her community or acquire the intellectual skills taught in school.

**Curriculum.** Each system wants to control the curriculum. In the traditional system, the whole person is the true focus of education. For traditionalists, the schools should not produce adults who do not have the necessary skills to be integrated into the community. They would like to introduce into the formal curriculum elements that will compensate for the fact that young people are not under their guidance completely. On the other hand, teachers often feel that emphasis on non-examinable material is a waste of time.

## How Does Traditional African Education Affect Formal Education Systems?

**School Routines.** In some cases, school routines have become more flexible in order to allow pupils to attend important ceremonies such as initiations.

**Curriculum.** Traditionalists will inevitably insist that more time be devoted to material that furthers the goals of the traditional society. This is particularly true with language, which is seen as a potent instrument for preserving culture.

**Methods of Teaching.** Conventional teaching methods might not be suitable for the transmission of culture because:

- Knowledge is often the privilege of the initiated, for example, old men and women. Therefore, the teacher might not be deemed fit to teach certain topics.
- The classroom environment tends to distance practice from theory, therefore negating the purpose of cultural instruction.
- The school in its present form may not be the best vehicle through which to inculcate traditional values.

**Orientation of Assessment.** Typically, the formal education systems in the SADC region rely on examinations imported from other countries. Obviously, these forms of assessment do not suit the purposes of the traditionalists, as the exams do not include or take into account local traditions and culture.

## The Present and Possible Future

Language policy has already been greatly affected by the demands of the wider, more traditional, community. As SADC countries distance themselves from their colonial past, some new developments might make their school systems depart

from European models and forge a distinctly regional character.

For instance, it is difficult to see how culture can be taught formally. In Zimbabwe there have been attempts to introduce a scheme called 'izalukazi lamaxhegu'. Old people are invited into the school to give instruction in various aspects of the culture.

Serious consideration has to be given to the structure of the school day, making allowance for children's social and religious duties. A system might have to be introduced whereby schools have a flexible routine and judge attendance not by days when a child is obliged to be at school, but by hours that he or she is able to attend.

It seems that if traditional culture is to respond to the challenges posed by formal education, then formal education must become less formal.



### **Practice Activity**

Read the case study below, and answer the questions that follow it.

**Lesotho Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture  
Features of the Proposed Five-Year Comprehensive  
Secondary Education Programme, 1984.**

- Traditional Sesotho Education: though informal, it incorporated cultural norms and was oriented towards practical activities relevant to the demands of society.
- Formal Education: biased towards teaching and learning of the colonial masters' language and culture, with a detrimental effect on the use of the mother tongue and a national culture.
- Language and Culture: reference was made to people who lament the deterioration in the use of the mother tongue, as well as cultural traits.
- Careless and Incorrect Use of Language: due to de-culturisation, lack of self-respect and of a respect for the national language; a great number of the people no longer spoke 'pure and un-defiled' Sesotho.

Examine the points above and answer the following:

1. What is the criticism of formal education contained above?
2. What did the authors fear was happening to Sesotho?

Read the recommendations of the Lesotho government report below and answer the questions that follow:

**The Lesotho Proposed Five-Year Comprehensive Secondary Education Programme (1984: 59): A Few Recommendations**

- Medium of Instruction: that Sesotho be used as a medium of instruction in all subjects, provided textbooks in Sesotho are made available.
- That Sesotho becomes a compulsory subject up to the university level.
- Instructional Hours: That teaching periods of Sesotho should be increased. That pupils/students should not be punished for speaking Sesotho.
- Selection of Teachers: That heads of schools should select persons well qualified to handle the subject as they do when they select mathematics or science instructors.
- Research. That scholarships/fellowships will be made available for those who wish to have further training, or to conduct research in Sesotho.

3. Examine the first recommendation and explain whether it would be possible to implement in your area or not.
4. Which recommendation attempts to improve the quality of Sesotho instruction?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



### Summary

Traditional African education is a way of life, unlike formal education that is a period of training. Traditional African education has already influenced formal education. The preoccupation with language policy in the SADC region will give education systems a distinctly SADC character.

However, more needs to be done to the very structure and nature of formal education in the region if culture is to be preserved. It is very likely that education systems in the SADC region will evolve further.



## Reflection

How has your school accommodated traditional African education? Could it do more to include cultural aspects in the formal education system?



## Unit Test

1. How might language policy conflict with a school's desire to instruct children in formal subjects?
2. Why might pupils not be interested in cultural instruction?
3. In what way can this statement below be justified?

Traditional African education has given the countries of the SADC region a distinctly regional character, yet their school systems have not done enough to develop that character.

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



## Suggested Answers

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### Introductory Activity

Missionaries thought there was no education in Africa because people did not read or write and there did not appear to be any structure to traditional African education.

### Self-Assessment 1

1. Apprenticeships are based on the belief that theory must be translated into practice; therefore, hands-on experience is essential.
2. Survival skills such as hunting, gathering, growing crops, tending animals and the manufacture of goods are examples of activities that could be best taught in traditional communities.

### Self-Assessment 2

In this case, any five riddles or proverbs will be appropriate. You must also indicate whether these proverbs or riddles are still culturally relevant. By this, we mean that while they were appropriate during a certain period, they may no longer be relevant, especially if your culture has changed.

The wisdom contained in these products of cultures often refers to values and mores that highlight some aspect of human relationships or articles of belief that transcend time and even place. The proverbs cited in this unit could have been applicable to any society.

### Self-Assessment 3

1. A specialist teacher might be required when teachers need someone to talk about skins or healing and when deep knowledge of the culture is required.
2. The mantombwa game was guided because the mother gave input, provided feedback and motivated the child.

### Practice Activity

1. Formal education is criticised for being biased and promoting the culture of the former colonial power.
2. The authors feared that Sesotho was being corrupted by English.
3. Sesotho should be made compulsory and the medium of instruction.
  - This might not be possible in your area because a number of languages may be used. Therefore, friction could result.

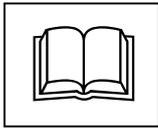
- It might not be possible to implement this recommendation due to a lack of resources required to produce enough books in a particular language.
  - It might be possible to implement the recommendation if your area is homogenous and/or you have resources to print books and other teaching and learning materials.
4. Selecting qualified specialist teachers could improve the quality of Sesotho instruction.

### **Unit Test**

1. Language instruction competes with other more traditional school subjects for time, especially if the language to be learned is not the normal medium of instruction. Therefore, the local language instruction would not be rated highly.
2. Pupils may not be interested in cultural instruction, as they might be alienated from their own culture by Western culture. They may believe local languages are not as valuable as more formal subjects.
3. Certain SADC countries have tried to promote local languages. Countries such as Swaziland have promoted their ceremonies as well. However, the school routine restricts the time available for cultural instruction. Cultural instruction is a comprehensive process. Teachers may not be the best or most suitable people to deliver such instruction. Schools need to be more open to allow access to the school to the custodians of culture.

# UNIT 5: Characteristics of a National Education System

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## Introduction

The preceding units have argued that there are factors that affect education and these are peculiar to countries. These factors give education systems a special character. The aim of this unit is to share with you issues of critical importance to a national education system.

I am not a teacher, only a fellow traveller of whom you asked the way. I pointed ahead, ahead of myself as well as you. (Show, 1973, in P. C. Luthuli, 1982)

We urge you to be our fellow traveller and to be sensitive to the unique features of your country as well as those of others.

## Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define the philosophy of life as it relates to education.
2. Identify the major influences on your education system.
3. Describe the characteristics of your education system.

## Culture as a Determinant of a National Philosophy of Life

Your society has certain values, attitudes and beliefs that distinguish it from others. This may be termed your culture. **Culture** embraces a worthy heritage that is passed on from one generation to another by the family, the peer group, the mass media and the schools. This process leads to the development of a particular **philosophy of life** that is shared by members of the society.

A particular philosophy of life...can be described as the totality of people's views, beliefs and connections and is part of a child's cultural heritage. (Luthuli, 1982: 42)

We should therefore attempt to note what aspects of a people's way of life make them what they are. What makes a Zimbabwean a Zimbabwean, a Zambian a Zambian, or a Namibian a Namibian, for example?

After many years of colonial rule, Black people have changed significantly. In all former colonies, the Black population was coerced into believing that White is good and Black is bad. Their religion was termed pagan, their languages vernacular and their adult males, boys! We will not dwell further on this, but invite you to think about it as you proceed through this unit.

Although Black people today are far different from what they were before colonialism, it is good to note that despite the pressures of Western dominance, many indigenous people have retained part or much of their cultural heritage. Luthuli (1982: 44) notes that,

it is only through those truths, values,  
sentiments and beliefs and traditions which  
Redden and Kyan call “immutable” that they  
may still be recognised as Blacks.

Immutable means never changing or impossible to change. These aspects are impossible to change not because they are natural or God-given, but because people cherish them so much that they would sacrifice anything to safeguard them. There are two reasons for this. First, these aspects have been gained over many years of ethnic experience and at times learned the painful way. Consider here taboos such as “If a man enters the hut of a woman who has just had a baby, the baby will die,” and “If you move backwards, your mother will lose her breasts.” The first is heard in Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, where the statement was considered to be both a hygienic and family planning measure. The second taboo was meant to prevent falls.

**National character** is the sum total of shared truths, values, sentiments and traditions which are unchanging over time and are unconsciously expressed in the behaviour of nationals. You may attempt your own definition by reflecting on what makes your nation distinct.

### ***Cultural Consciousness and Ethnocentrism***

Related to the above is cultural consciousness. Note that cultures may differ within the same nation, but a philosophy of life and national character is shared by all. People will do anything to protect their culture.

You have heard people describe others as Westernised. In Zimbabwe, they have the ‘Nose Brigade’. Is this a compliment?

The SADC countries have tribal-based cultures that are of value to those who embrace the culture. Any attempt to undermine them now will not succeed, as was the case when the colonial rulers attempted and failed. Tribal cultures are

based on a particular philosophy of life shared by the tribe. Consequently, members of each group try to preserve their culture and ensure it has a place in the national character.

There are values in any culture that are not affected by time and place (Chaube and Chaube, 1993). However, this should not be taken to mean that all aspects of culture are unaffected by time and place.

At both the tribal and national levels, there is always a desire to:

- preserve the cultural heritage of the past,
- acquaint the growing generation with the culture, and
- contribute towards the growth and protection of the culture.

All this is good and should be applauded. However, note that past culture conflicts have led to ethnocentrism. The dominant group in the country may look down upon others and thus exalt themselves. They look at the world through their eyes only and are not sensitive, nor do they want to understand and appreciate the ways of others.

### ***Love of One's Country***

The other characteristic of a national system is the desire to develop the love of one's culture in the belief that this helps strengthen nationalism. Chaube and Chaube (1993: 27) argue, "It is necessary to develop love for one's own culture through the education system because it strengthens nationalism." They maintain that nationalism must be encouraged to make the country strong and prosperous. No doubt, many people have no national feeling and therefore ignore their national obligation. This makes the development of a national system of education important.

### ***Economic Security as a Characteristic of an Education System***

Linked to the above is the concern for economic security. You will remember that no education system can rise beyond the community that supports it. The underlying reason is that "The economic security of the country becomes a determining factor of the type of education it can afford to have" (Chaube and Chaube, 1993).

For that reason, education has been used as a tool for:

- maximising the development of individuals and hence of the country, and
- shaping a proper national character with good citizenship and cooperation and a willingness to safeguard economic gains from civil strife.

Our countries have many tribal, linguistic, religious and class groupings which must be considered in our educational policies. A national education system attempts to embrace all of these differences in order to build a national consciousness.

### **Language Policy as Characteristic of a National Education System**

The last characteristic of the national education system is language. The idea of an official and national language requires a unit of its own to be dealt with fully. However, it should be noted that the official languages will feature strongly in the curriculum if compared to other languages spoken in the land.

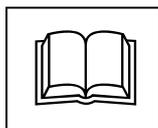
Chaube and Chaube (1993: 30) state, “Without one’s own national language, no country can be strong.” Do you believe this?



#### **Self-Assessment 1**

1. List characteristics that make a national education system unique.
2. Which characteristics come first? Explain why.
3. How does the economy affect a national education system?

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



#### **Historical Background of SADC National Education Systems**

It is not possible to study African national education systems without considering their colonial origins. Chaube and Chaube (1993: 31) note that “the political philosophy which controls the government of a country has its inevitable input in education”. Can you distinguish between a political philosophy and a philosophy of life? Although related, they are different. The political philosophy is basically ideology and can be borrowed, but the philosophy of life is developed by all the people as a result of their collective experience from the past.

#### **Political Ideology**

Political ideologies of our region, past and present, include:

- Apartheid in South Africa
- Assimilation in Mozambique
- Racial Capitalism in colonial Zimbabwe
- Humanism in Zambia after independence
- Socialism in early independent Zimbabwe
- Ujama or self-reliance in independent Tanzania
- Ubuntu now gaining ground in the SADC region.

Luthuli (1982) describes the African philosophy of life as basically communalistic and illustrates this by observing the following:

- behaviour patterns
- kingship
- village and political life
- distribution of food
- marriage, birth and death ceremonies
- religion
- ownership of land and natural wealth.

Under religion, for example, Luthuli identifies ceremonial rituals in which the head of the household performed religious activities on behalf of all household members. How does this contrast with modern Christianity?

As a result of the racial political philosophy of the colonial rulers, post-independence SADC nations have adopted a confrontational posture. A number adopted socialism as their political ideology. Socialism was directly opposed to the philosophy of their former masters. This has had an impact on the philosophy of life of the people, as well as on their education systems.

Despite all the political changes, the elements of the communalistic philosophy of life have outlived both colonialism and the early independence search for identity. Can we therefore describe them as immutable? Time will tell.

### **A Quest for a Philosophy of Life for Education**

The complaints about the colonial systems and our present system of education show a need for a properly formed philosophy of life. Nxumalo (1957) in Luthuli (1982: 34) indicates that:

Education dictated to and framed from outside has become not only irrelevant but dangerous. It is responsible for training the mind in space. It produces figures who float in suspense and lack roots in their society. Such people have no direction to their future.

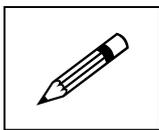
Is this your idea of Westernisation? The educated young are not only cut off from their parents, but are also ashamed of their origins.

In your study of education systems, try to search for the underlying philosophy of life. In the SADC countries, the Bantu people share elements of a similar philosophy of life.

Do you agree with Luthuli (1982: 34) that “Black education should be rooted in Black Humanism,” as a philosophy of life? You don’t have to agree with this statement, but do think about the philosophy of life that guides you.

A philosophy of life is a very strong characteristic of a national education system. It distinguishes education systems that produce fully actualised personalities who are proud of their countries and consequently make meaningful contributions to society.

Before we end this unit, note that, in studying a foreign system of education, we should never forget that factors outside the school system matter even more than those inside. The philosophy of life, culture, ideology, ethnocentrism, economic security and language policy are just a few of the outside factors that affect education.



### **Self-Assessment 2**

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is ethnocentrism?
2. What does immutable mean?
3. Which aims of education are culturally based?



### **Summary**

This unit has argued that to be defined as national, the education system must take into account the national political ideology, the philosophy of life, the language policy and, among other things, the culture of the people. These are aspects you need to research as you do your comparative studies. Even in situations where your focus does not include them, sensitivity to these characteristics will enrich your studies.



### **Unit Test**

“We should not forget that factors outside the school system matter more than those inside.”

1. Define the term ‘philosophy of life’.
2. List the factors inside the school system that have a significant impact on the quality and effectiveness of the education system.
3. List factors outside the school system that affect the education system.
4. What would you recommend as policy guidelines in your effort to improve the current education system? Provide at least three recommendations. Explain your response and relate it to the education system in your country.

Suggested answers are provided at the end of this unit.



## Suggested Answers

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### Self-Assessment 1

1. Characteristics that make a national education system unique include culture, philosophy of life, love of one's culture, patriotism, economic security, political ideology and national language policy.
2. Culture and philosophy of life are the bases for all the other aspects of a national education system.

### Self-Assessment 2

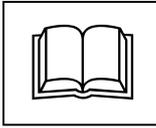
1. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view other cultures from one's own cultural perspective, and thus to judge others wrongly.
2. Immutable means unchanging.
3. The economy determines the type of education system that the country can afford. Even if the country would like to have a free, accessible education system, it may not be able to afford it.

### Unit Test

1. A philosophy of life is a combination of the knowledge, beliefs and connections that are so important to a society that they must be passed on to the children.
2. Factors within the school system that affect its quality and effectiveness are highly qualified teachers, well-equipped laboratories, educational media and extra student-teacher contact time, or the lack of these.
3. The examination system is a major outside factor. Usually the examinations are from European countries. These examinations do not acknowledge progress brought about by improved educational inputs and changes to racial segregation in the region. Other external factors that affect school activities are: the national language policy, the philosophy of life of the society, political ideology and the economy.
4. There are a variety of possible answers to this question, but you could suggest:
  - a change in the examination system.
  - a credit system which measures what one can do and not how long one has attended school,
  - respect for human rights, and
  - curriculum change that involves the inclusion of more practical subjects and those that impart management skills.

# UNIT 6: Impact of the Missionary and Colonial Legacy on Education Systems in the SADC Region

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## Introduction

In the unit on traditional African education, we noted that traditional African education was a system in its own right with clearly defined goals. Why, then, did formal systems of education come to Africa?

You will be able to answer this question as you complete this unit and appreciate how mission schools and colonial governments of the past still influence the education systems of today.

## Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain why missionaries established mission schools in the SADC region.
2. Contrast various colonial education systems.
3. Highlight common experiences of various countries in SADC.
4. Evaluate the motives of the policy makers of mission and colonial education systems.



## Introductory Activity

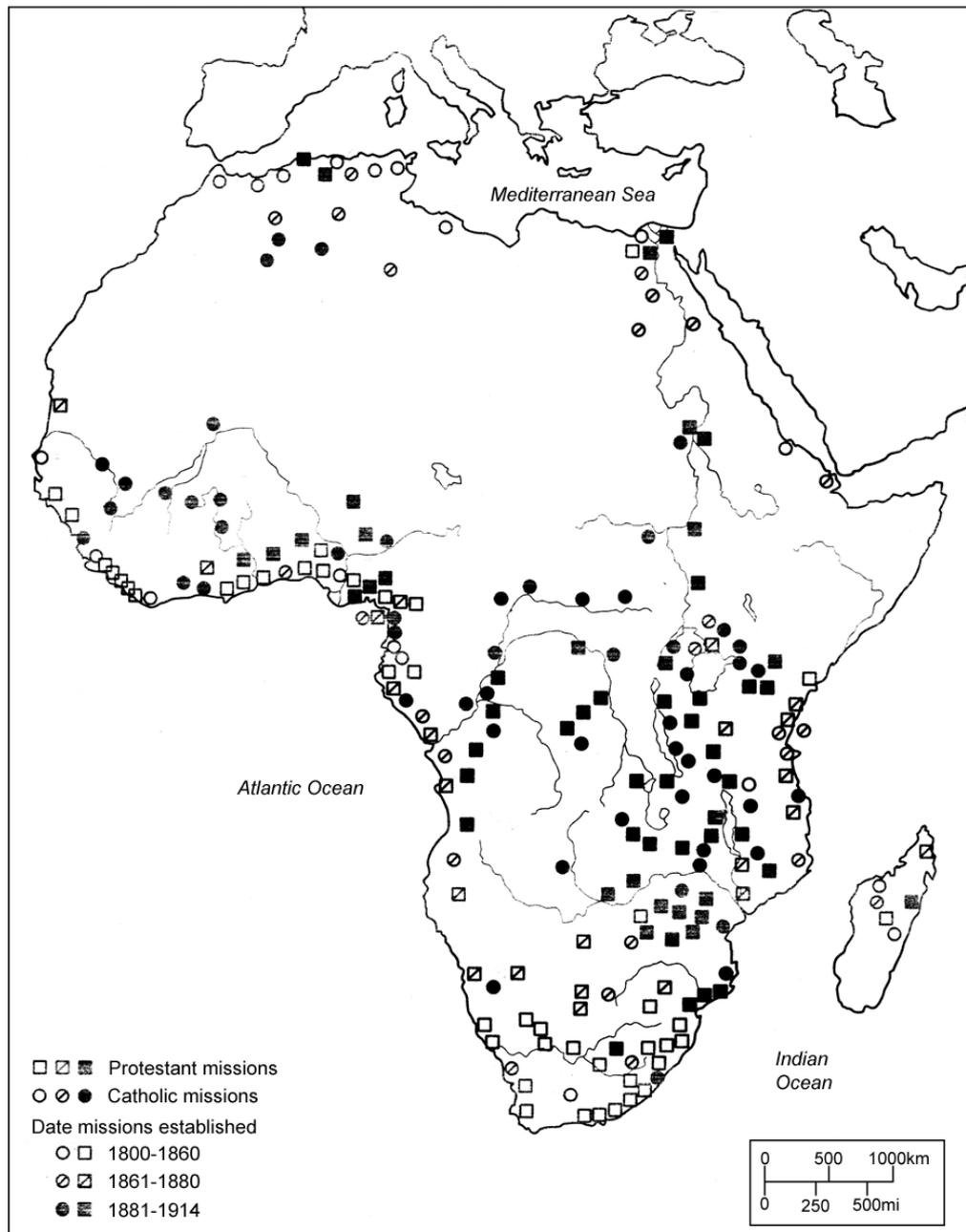
Examine the map on the next page and complete or answer the items below.

1. Choose the area where your country is situated and find out when most of the missions in your area were built.
2. Where were most missions established between 1800 and 1860?
3. Where were most missions established between 1881 and 1914?

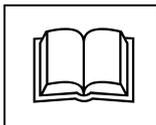
Answers are provided at the end of this unit.

## Exploration and Colonialism

### CHRISTIAN MISSIONS 1800-1914



Source: *The Impact of the Missionary and Colonial Legacy*.



### Why Missionaries Came to Africa

Missionaries came to Africa to save souls. If this meant supporting the regime at that time, then they did. Some might have rationalised and said the evil of slavery was offset by the greater virtue – as they saw it – of converting Africans to Christianity. However, many missions actively engaged in the slave trade.

### **A Case Study: Angola**

Did missionaries come to Africa only to spread the word of their God?

This question is not easy to answer. Religion does not operate in isolation, even though churches might like to declare that they are only interested in their version of salvation. A church cannot isolate itself from the social and political climate it finds itself in. For its own benefit and survival, it might engage in 'worldly' activities.

The first contact between the Kongo Kingdom and the Portuguese occurred in 1482. While the Kongo Kingdom was being Westernised and the ruler, the Mani Kongo, was being converted, the Portuguese neglected its neighbour Angola.

In fact, the ruler of Angola invited Manuel I, King of Portugal, to send missionaries and merchants to his country in 1519. An expedition was sent, but Portuguese interest in Angola quickly died, as their search for silver was unsuccessful.

The next expedition was sent in 1560. It was led by Dias de Novaes. While in Angola, he became interested in the highly profitable slave trade between Luanda and Sao Thome. With the help of the Jesuits, he obtained a donatario that gave him authority to colonise Angola at his own expense.

Eventually, Angola came under Portuguese control. The most important feature of this period was that Luanda was the single largest slave port in West-Central Africa. Three million slaves were exported from Angola between 1580 and 1836. This represented 80 percent of Angola's total trade.

### **David Livingstone**

David Livingstone was the most famous of all missionaries to come to Africa. But why is he famous? He is not famous for converting Africans; he is famous because he was an explorer.

Livingstone was a product of his time. He was the forerunner of European colonialists. He appealed to businessmen to come to Africa because he believed that mission work would be impossible without European commerce.

Christian missionaries were firmly convinced of the necessity of their work. In 1889, W. A. Elmslie described the Ngoni in these terms: they "sadly lack God, and are living in dreadful degradation" (Berman, 1975: 6).

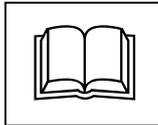
Whether this was the only reason missionaries came to Africa is another matter. Many might have genuinely felt when they came that they were in Africa to save souls, but after arrival many became more than missionaries.



### Self-Assessment 1

1. In Unit 1 of this module, you learned about the quantitative, descriptive, sociological, historical, analytical and synthesist methods of study. What method might best be employed to study the question of why missionaries came to Africa?
2. What method might be used to study the impact of mission schools?

Suggested answers to this activity are provided at the back of this unit.



### What Type of Education Did the Missionaries Bring to Africa?

From the missionaries' point of view, the aim of education was to spread the gospel. You may have come into contact with missionaries. What do you think their aim was?

In order to spread the word, literacy was necessary so that their converts could read the Bible and catechists could help spread its message. However, too much learning was believed to be dangerous. This paradoxical state of affairs meant missionaries were prepared to introduce a little education, but feared introducing too much!

In 1881, the Livingstone Mission was moved north to Bandawe on the western shore of Lake Malawi. By 1890, 2000 Tonga children were attending school. Initially, conversion to Christianity preceded admittance to the institution, which taught basic literacy and offered either industrial or agricultural training. This pattern was followed by other missions.

In Namibia, the Rhenish Missionary Society was very active. For instance, in 1866 the Augustineum School at Otjimbingwe was founded. It was intended for the children of influential people who would later spread the gospel. The Rhenish Missionary Society also opened a school for the Coloureds at Rehoboth in the early 1870s and one for Whites at Otjimbugwe in 1876. Early missionary work provided segregated education.

## Colonial Education

This section provides case studies from Mozambique, Lesotho and South Africa.

### **Case Study: Mozambique**

Initially, colonial administrations were reluctant to get involved in education. They left it to the missionaries. The aims of colonial administrators were similar to those of early missionaries. These aims were stated by Cardinal Cerejina, Patriarch of Lisbon, in 1960.

We try to teach the native population reading, writing and arithmetic, not make 'doctors' of them...to educate and instruct them so as to make them prisoners of the soil and to protect them from the life of the towns.... (Harber, 1989: 170)

Missionaries were afraid too much education would make people question the Bible. Colonial rulers had similar fears; they believed too much education would make their subjects question colonial policies.

In Mozambique, all teaching was in Portuguese. The school curriculum concentrated on Portuguese culture, history, geography and even Portuguese botany.

Africans who achieved fluency and literacy in Portuguese could be eligible for *assimilado* (assimilated) status, provided that they fulfilled certain conditions. They could become 'Black' Portuguese by denying their Black culture.

### **Case Study: Lesotho**

In Lesotho, the government did not involve itself in education. From 1872, it grant-aided some schools but did not supervise them. In the 1880s, minimal supervision was begun.

In 1887, a Department of Education was established with an inspector, two Basotho-assisted inspectors and a Mosotho clerk. A commission of enquiry recommended in 1925 that:

- government should control educational policy,
- proper machinery be implemented to develop syllabi, and
- thorough planning of educational policy be instituted.

In 1964, a UNESCO education mission observed that education policy in Lesotho was neglected. This was a common feature of British administration wherever a White settler population was not particularly large. In such instances, the colonial rulers relied on the existing mission schools.

### **Case Study: South Africa**

Unlike some British colonies, South Africa had a very large settler population that no longer regarded itself as a settler population. Education was seen as an instrument for maintaining political control by keeping the larger, hostile Black population down.

Apartheid governments developed the Christian National Education Policy (CNE), which is briefly explained below.

- It was Christian because it claimed that God placed the White minority where it was. It had a divine mandate.
- It was national in the sense that the White population should be indoctrinated to guard its cultural identity.
- In short, education should be designed to support and legitimate Christian and national (White) values.

CNE policy for the Black majority was that education should:

- be in the mother languages,
- not be at the expense of White education,
- not prepare the Black majority for equal participation in society,
- preserve cultural identity, and
- convince Blacks that Christian national principles should be determined by Whites. (Harber, 1989: 184)

In South Africa, the language policy was used as a tool of oppression. By maintaining many languages, the government intended that Blacks would:

- keep focussed on their smaller communities instead of their collective situation, and
- be denied access to the knowledge needed to challenge the authority of the state.

Education was guided by this policy and the curriculum was designed to suit its purposes. For instance, history was considered an inflammatory subject and the textbooks and syllabi were used to support the existing order. Below are some examples of how the curriculum topics were interpreted.

- **The Great Trek** was presented in terms of the Boers occupying empty land and being attacked rather than displacing people from their land.
- **Pre-colonial history** was neglected, perpetuating the myth that Africans did not have a history before the arrival of the Europeans.

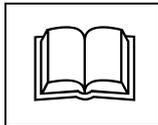
- **Nationalism** in new African states was regarded as misguided and dangerous, whereas Afrikaner nationalism was justified.
- **Equalitarianism** was considered wrong for Africa, as shown by the treatment of the French revolution in textbooks. (Harber, 1989: 185–187)



## Self-Assessment 2

1. Explain the meaning of the words ‘assimilation’ and ‘segregation’ in reference to cultures.
2. What effect would assimilation and segregation have on language policy?
3. Why is history a particularly sensitive subject for a government that wants to further its political agenda?

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



## The Legacy of Colonial Administration

Portuguese colonies followed a policy of assimilation. They wanted small segments of the Black population to accept Portuguese culture and forget their own. They hoped that by this practice they would win a useful group of supporters.

Segregation was common in British colonies because these colonial administrators preferred indirect rule. By choosing local leaders who they believed would remain loyal, they hoped to rule through them by affording them limited illusory power. In these cases, education was neglected.

In those countries where the settler population was large, the education system was used to defend and legitimate the political system.

Regardless of which policy was followed, the education system became:

- **Elitist.** Schools for Whites, and a restricted number of schools for Blacks, were well supplied and equipped.
- **Discriminatory**
  - **By design.** Schools for Blacks were poor and disadvantaged because they were given very limited resources. The curriculum emphasised their supposed inferiority.
  - **By omission.** Few schools were built. The Black sector suffered neglect.

- **By degree.** Blacks and Whites were separated.
- Blacks were actively discouraged from demanding quality education.
- **Derogatory.** The curricula undervalued or even denigrated local culture.



### Self-Assessment 3

1. In your own country, can you identify a school that in colonial times was for Whites and one that was for Blacks? Can you see how they might have differed during those times?
2. Were the results of assimilation and segregation the same? Explain.

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



### Reflection

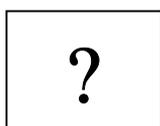
In what ways were the curriculum and school delivery systems affected by colonial administrations in your country?

Post-independence writers often write bitterly about the colonial period. In what ways have post-independence governments in your country failed to overcome this legacy?



### Summary

This unit introduced you to the effects of missionaries and the colonial legacy on education in the SADC region. The missionaries came to Africa to save souls. So that the Africans could read the Bible, basic literacy classes were offered in schools. European colonial masters had various views about educating the indigenous peoples. Some had a 'hands-off' policy and left education to be administered by the missionaries. Others established schools, but these were normally segregated so that White students had a more rigorous education and better facilities. The education systems established by the colonists were characterised as elitist, discriminatory and derogatory.



### Unit Test

1. Why do you think ending segregated school facilities might have provoked fear among White children? How might Black children have reacted to desegregation?

2. What are the origins of segregation in the school systems of SADC countries? Answer under these headings:
  - a. Racial theory
  - b. Religious belief
  - c. Political necessity.
3. What are *assimilados* and what was likely to be their cultural status?

Answers to this unit test are provided at the end of this unit.



## Suggested Answers

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### Introductory Activity

1. Refer to the key. Circles represent missions established between 1800 and 1860. Circles with lines represent missions established from 1861 to 1880.
2. Between 1800 and 1860, most missions were established along the coast.
3. Between 1881 and 1914, most missions were established further inland, particularly along the major rivers.

### Self-Assessment 1

1. The historical method could be used to study the question of why missionaries came to Africa.
2. The historical method might examine anecdotes and people's descriptions. The statistical method could be used to examine outcomes and the sociological method might emphasise the legacy of the mission school system.

### Self-Assessment 2

1. Assimilation means to bring races together so that one culture is absorbed by another. The minority culture will acquire the characteristics of the majority culture.  
Segregation means to keep races separate so they can develop separately.
2. Assimilation actively seeks to destroy local languages, while segregation tries to promote differences by allowing the use of local languages.
3. Governments may not be in favour of historical analysis, as the results may challenge assumptions and myths that legitimise present arrangements that are unfair or unjust.

### Self-Assessment 3

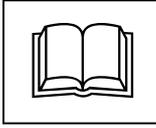
1. Find out the history of schools built before independence in your country. When you look at actual schools or photographs of schools built in colonial times, usually you will see from the structures that the buildings in the White schools of the colonial period were superior to those of the Black schools of the same period.
2. Both assimilation and segregation undermine self-esteem. When one is assimilated, one loses his or her cultural identity and replaces it with another. When one is segregated, one race is thought of as being superior to the other. The education systems within areas that were assimilated or segregated were generally the same.

## Unit Test

1. Whites might fear that desegregation is the end of their privileges, while Black children might hope they will get access to better educational facilities.
2.
  - a. Racial theory. Segregation might arise because of the belief in the superiority of the White races.
  - b. Religious belief. Missionaries believed that Blacks needed to be saved. Since Whites were already considered saved, the purposes of Black and White education would be different.
  - c. Political necessity. Segregation was a means of denying political rights to an oppressed group. By ensuring Blacks had an inferior education, segregation might deny them the tools to challenge an oppressive regime.
2. Assimilados had denied their own cultural heritage in favour of the culture of the colonial power, but they were neither truly local nor truly Portuguese. They had been separated from their own culture but it was unlikely they would ever be accepted as Portuguese because of their race.

# UNIT 7: Post-Independence Systems of Education

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## Introduction

In the SADC region, colonisation was a common experience and, eventually, so was independence. However, the means by which each country attained independence and the time it took to do so differ.

Independence brought with it radical changes which had profound effects on the education system. You will remember from other units that economic and political power belonged, until then, to the colonial settlers. Independence meant a shift of the power base, at least in the political sense.

This unit will help you to establish how independence changed the education system in your country and its neighbours.

## Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Analyse immediate challenges after independence.
2. Appraise the resultant policy reactions against political and economic considerations.
3. Assess policy outcomes.
4. Compare prevailing situations across the region.

## Impact of the Liberation Wars on Education

The fight for independence affected the whole region, including those countries that did not have to go to war for their own independence from colonial rule. The concept of the front-line states is probably not new to you. Guerrilla movements from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, Angola, Namibia and other countries had bases as far north as Egypt. Therefore, the burden of the struggle for independence was shared across the region. Just to remind you:

- In June 1976, South Africa bombed SWAPO refugee camps at Shatutwa and again in May 1978 at Kasinga in southern Angola, killing 800 people.
- In September 1979, Rhodesian forces raided Mozambique.
- A number of similar raids were made on Zambia and other countries.

The impact of war was felt by the whole region. It weakened economies and destroyed the institutional and infrastructural base that colonial governments had left in newly independent countries. In the countries themselves, war stopped the education system from functioning, especially in rural areas. Gatawa (1998: 15) observes that:

The near collapse of civil administration due to the liberation war in a number of rural areas...played havoc with the educational infrastructure.

Your country may have been affected the same way. If not, studying those countries that were affected will sensitise you to their predicament then and now. Gatawa (1998: 5) states:

Driven by a genuine desire to rectify the imbalances of the past, newly independent African countries have not always been able to find a working balance between political and ideological imperatives on the one hand and the economic and educational considerations on the other.

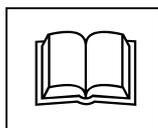
In other words, we must balance the needs and the means. Policies must take into consideration the legacy of racist colonial systems and the damage done by war.



### **Self-Assessment 1**

1. List the characteristics of the education systems inherited at independence.
2. In what ways were the education systems in the front-line states affected by the liberation wars?

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



You should note that pre-independence political manifestos of some liberation parties had a strong influence on the policy-making process. The reasons could be that the party cadres who were given policy-making functions at independence used their manifestos as a basis. Also, there were very few people with the necessary education and experience to plan for an education system which already had a backlog of youths to educate. Harber (1989: 7) notes that:

The restricted access of Africans to formal education during the colonial period meant that those who filled positions of political and administrative authority after independence were...drawn from this limited group.

He further illustrates his point thus: in Tanzania in the 1960s, a survey showed that 45% of high-ranking officials, including the president and 21% legislators, had attended Tabura School; by 1974, 37% of the candidates for the Botswana National Assembly had attended Tiger Kloof School in South Africa. The illustration implies that if there were any policy defects, they may not have been detected because policy makers had the same philosophy of life developed by their shared school experiences and political ideology.

Consider also that these officials were leading a largely illiterate population who believed them without question. Needham et al. (1984: 187) quote a Malawian nationalist leader Chipembere saying, “Human nature is such that it needs a kind of hero to be hero-worshipped if a political struggle is to succeed.” We all had our heroes; some are still alive, while others are dead. What do you consider would be a natural response to policies that our heroes provided? Below are some of the policy guidelines that cut across the region.

- Declare education as a human right.
- Expand the education system at all levels.
- Establish far-reaching supervisory and administrative structures.
- Fund education from state resources.
- Redesign the curriculum to reflect the traditions and aspirations of local people.
- Train a large number of teachers, sometimes using non-conventional means.
- Democratise racially-based education systems.
- Provide educational infrastructures to communities that did not have any.
- Change racially-based and irrelevant curricula.
- Develop local languages and culture.
- Put schools at the centre of community problem-solving activities.
- Use schools to develop nationalism and encourage unity.

The above list represents the perceived aspirations in various SADC countries. We hope some of your country’s educational aspirations have been included. If not, list them in the margin.

These policy guidelines lead to an influx of the young into the school system. Remember, these include both children of school-going age and those whose education was delayed or interrupted by war.

Look at the table below, which describes enrolment figures and numbers of schools in Zimbabwe. You will notice that for the first eight years, enrolments continued to increase both at the primary and secondary levels, then declined somewhat in the primary schools. You may also be interested to know whether the number of schools increased as did the number of children.

**Primary and Secondary Schools and Enrolment Figures in Zimbabwe, 1979–1989**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>No. of Primary Schools</b> | <b>Enrolment</b> | <b>No. of Secondary Schools</b> | <b>Enrolment</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 1979        | 2 402                         | 819 586          | 177                             | 66 215           |
| 1980        | 3 161                         | 1 235 984        | 197                             | 74 321           |
| 1981        | 3 698                         | 1 715 163        | 694                             | 148 690          |
| 1982        | 3 880                         | 1 907 225        | 738                             | 227 047          |
| 1983        | 3 960                         | 2 044 487        | 790                             | 316 348          |
| 1984        | 4 161                         | 2 130 487        | 1 182                           | 416 413          |
| 1985        | 4 234                         | 2 216 878        | 1 215                           | 482 000          |
| 1986        | 4 297                         | 2 265 054        | 1 276                           | 537 427          |
| 1987        | 4 337                         | 2 251 319        | 1 395                           | 606 652          |
| 1988        | 4 471                         | 2 212 103        | 1 484                           | 641 005          |
| 1989        | 4 504                         | 2 214 939        | 1 506                           | 678 615          |

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture Zimbabwe, Computer and Statistics Unit. (1994).

You will notice that the number of primary schools increased by 88% and secondary schools by 750% between 1979 and 1989. You may also have noted that the primary school enrolment increased by 170%, while secondary school enrolment increased by 925%. Is this not overwhelming?

Now compare the above with figures from Botswana below.

**Primary Schools Growth in Botswana, 1989–1993**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1989–1990   | 296 390       |
| 1993        | 304 904       |

Source: Ministry of Education Botswana, *Biennial Report 1992-1993*.

**Senior Secondary Schools Form 3 Enrolment in Botswana, 1987–1993**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1987        | 9 670         |
| 1992        | 20 895        |
| 1993        | 28 756        |

Source: Government of Botswana, *Fourth Biennial Report 1992-93*.

Although Botswana had attained independence earlier, you will realise that there was an overwhelming increase between 1987 or 1989 and 1993.

According to the World Bank Report (1984: 29), “The gross primary enrolment ratio for the thirty-nine sub-Saharan countries [that includes your country] as a whole was 75% in 1983, and in sixteen of them, the enrolment ratio exceeded 85%.”

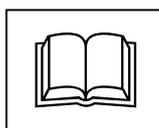
From all of this information, we can conclude that the common policy reaction after independence was to expand the education system. The expansion, however, was driven by a social demand, which may not have taken into account economic and educational considerations. We also know that the expansion in some countries was politically driven, thus some potential stakeholders were not involved.



## Self-Assessment 2

1. List common educational aims of post-independence SADC countries.
2. What do education systems in Zimbabwe and Botswana have in common?
3. What limitations did post-independence policy makers have?

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



## Education Policy Outcomes

One of the education policy outcomes has been a significant increase in school enrolments. You may realise, however, that the number of enrolments is not as important as what happens in the schools. You may wonder whether quality was matched with quantity. You may also wonder whether the countries in question had the necessary resources to support the expansion. The World Bank *Report on Sub-Sahara Education Systems* (1984: 29) reports, “Dilapidated buildings, missing or broken desks and lack of good ventilation and sanitation facilities are common place in African schools, especially in rural areas.” Even though many schools were built, there was inadequate funding for maintenance, thus limiting the gains made. The same World Bank report (1984: 42) notes, “The scarcity of learning materials in the classroom is the most serious impediment to educational effectiveness in Africa.” What is the situation like in your country? You may be

interested in finding out what other countries are doing to avoid these problems.

Another problem faced by our education systems is the lack of investment in management capacity. For quite some time, school-level decisions about planning and financial and personnel management were made by people with no training in these areas. Note again that a large number of teachers were also untrained.

In addition, practical, science and technical subjects, although taught, suffered from shortages of proper laboratories, workshops and tools.

Other problems relate to issues of efficiency and effectiveness. **Efficiency** here relates to how well resources put into education are being used. **Effectiveness** refers to whether or not the set objectives are being achieved.

Gatawa (1998: 6) notes that "...the picture is depressing". How is it in your country? Williams and Mchazime (1998: 1) state:

The situation in sub-Sahara Africa gives particular cause for concern: in Zambia there is ample evidence that the vast majority of primary school students are not able to read adequately.

Reading and writing are the most basic skills an education system is expected to develop. Therefore, failure in these areas means we are failing in many other areas.

The evidence of our failure is probably that we are producing job seekers instead of job creators right from primary to university.



### Self-Assessment 3

Describe at least three outcomes that were the result of the education policies applied after independence.



### Summary

This unit focussed on the characteristics of the post-independence education systems and the demands made on the systems by the people, politicians and policy makers. Two of the major challenges were the significant demand for education and the scarcity of resources. The unit does not put blame on anyone, but explains the situation as a whole. Lack of money and skills are major limitations. These were worsened by war as well as by weak economies. The current challenge is to balance the aspirations with the resources and the needs with the means.



## Reflection

Find out if your country has made a deliberate attempt to balance quantity with quality in your education system. Did your country learn from the experiences of others? Based on what has happened to the education system in your country, can you predict what will happen during the next ten years? What will be your role during this time period?



## Unit Test

1. Identify the immediate challenges to the education systems of SADC countries at the time of independence.
2. List the policy reactions to the challenges outlined in your answer to question 1.
3. What policies would you suggest to guide education in the future?



## Suggested Answers

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### Self-Assessment 1

1. Characteristics of the education system inherited at independence include the following:
  - racially-based access
  - racially-based curriculum
  - poor infrastructure, especially in the rural areas
  - disorganisation due to the impact of the wars for independence
  - untrained officers and teachers.
2. Effects of war on the education system of the front-line states:
  - competition for resources resulting from the desire to help other Blacks liberate themselves, and
  - destruction of property and life by raids made by colonial forces in countries such as Angola, Zambia and Mozambique.

### Self-Assessment 2

1. Common aims of post-independence countries include:
  - to democratise access to education
  - to expand education at all levels
  - to change the curriculum to suit the local needs
  - to use education to achieve political and economic ends.You may have identified other aims.
2. In both Botswana and Zimbabwe, there was a massive expansion of the education system in terms of pupil enrolments after independence.
3. Limitations of post-independence policy makers include:
  - lack of training and experience
  - failure to learn from older countries in the region
  - reliance on political manifestos
  - disregard of educational and economic considerations in their policy making.

### Self-Assessment 3

After independence, countries increased accessibility to education, but the system was not prepared for the influx of pupils. Consequently:

- the facilities were poor and they were poorly maintained,
- learning materials were scarce,
- there was a lack of qualified teachers and the use of untrained personnel,
- there was a lack of tools and materials for practical courses, labs and workshops, and
- the education system was inefficient and ineffective.

### Unit Test

1. At independence, countries were challenged by:
  - an influx of children demanding schooling as a result of the war backlog and the introduction of education for all policies, and
  - inadequate financial, professional and infrastructure resources.
2. The resultant policy reactions included:
  - the declaration of education as a basic human right,
  - the democratisation of access to education,
  - changes in the curriculum, and
  - the use of education as an instrument for social and economic transformation.
3. Future policies may include measures such as the following:
  - Develop flexible policies for funding schools. The funding would be related to an individual community's ability to pay.
  - Change the curriculum so that it will lead to more people graduating with practical skills.
  - Reconsider the language policy.
  - Invest in appropriate quality education, beginning with an emphasis on the primary and secondary grades.

You may have additional suggestions that could be added to the above list.

## Module Test

1. Identify methods used in comparative education to gather, analyse and interpret information.
2. List the factors that influence the development and operation of a national education system.
3. Which ideologies have been prominent across the SADC regions?
4. Briefly describe teaching strategies employed by traditional African education.
5. “Without one’s own national language, no country can be strong” (Chaube and Chaube, 1993: 30).  
Discuss this statement in the context of your country’s language policy.
6. What were the aims of education:
  - for missionaries?
  - for colonial settlers?
  - for SADC nations in the post-independence period?
7. How would you describe the education policy outcomes of the post-colonial SADC countries?
8. Name a missionary who became famous as an explorer and discuss his view that “mission work would be impossible without European commerce” relative to the development of education in colonial states.
9. Justify the study of comparative education.

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