Research Paper

Call for Activist-Propelled Decolonisation of Education in Africa

Prof Atieno Kili K'Odhiambo

University of Nairobi
Department of Educational Foundations
P. O. Box 30197-00100 Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract
Just in the same way the elites of Africa marshaled citizens and other liked-minded people to resort to armed struggle to dismantle colonialism, now it is posited to be the turn of activists to marshal resources, both human and material, to dismantle education which is full of colonial underpinnings and in its place establish education which is future oriented and relevant for technological advancement. Leaders in Africa seek endless support from foreign countries, instilling in the minds of their citizens that development is premised on foreign funding; a scenario that must be dismantled through activist-propelled endeavours. In this paper, analysis as a second order research methodology is used to argue in a historical perspective the genesis of school education and the colonial underpinnings that have girded education in Africa throughout the ages. School education originated in Africa and it is due to its transformative passages that education in Africa is full of colonial undertones. The fight to decolonise education cannot be successful by talking in conferences and workshops but through activism supported by national and international instruments.
Key Terms: Activism, Coloniality, Decoloniality and Education

I.   Introduction

The main problem addressed in this paper is, "Why does Africa continue to talk about decolonising education without taking up tangible steps to rectify the situation?" Why continuously hold conferences and workshops on decolonising education in Africa?

As explained by Agherdien, Pillay, Dube and Masinga (2022), to decolonise education in Africa is to make the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values independent of foreign influence.   Indigenous African Knowledge, skills and values are inherent in community culture, laws, food science, medicine, religious beliefs, views on the universe and the environment. For example, by using African food science and medicine, diseases like diabetes and hypertension can be cheaply managed. Many studies in Africa take knowledge as it is in the Western world and the discussion that ensues is negative and very far away from African realities (Basedau, 2020).

Coloniality and its related concept decoloniality, were first discussed in 1995 by Walter Mignolo as a rethink to indigenous ways of knowing (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, Mignolo, 2017). Coloniality is described by Nyere (2023) as the attitude of mind that remains after colonialism has been dismantled. To fight coloniality is to remove colonialism epistemically, dismantling alien ways of knowing and replacing them with what is relevant (Omanga, 2020). It is what Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1987) may call decolonising the mind but the mind can be decolonised yet coloniality still exists epistemologically. Coloniality is manifested when Euro-North American intellectual thought is used as the standard of gauging knowledge whereby anything to the contrary is regarded as an opinion. Nyere explains further that Euro-North American-centric thought is disseminated through universities, media houses, publishing firms and socio-cultural practices. Decoloniality is the opposite of coloniality and it refers to delinking intellectualism from Euro-North American-centric thought. Decolonisation of education in Africa is commendable but as noted by Wingfield (2020) it should not put research and scholarship in jeopardy. Mampane, Omidire and Aluko (2018) suggest that the youth are to lead in the decolonisation of education which must incorporate indigenous knowledge. There are very many ways of knowing which are not based on either European or American thought systems. Africans can employ activism to demand ways of knowing which are relevant to African knowledge systems. "Activism" or "activist-propelled" are terms that have been common in

my discourses whereupon I advocate for people taking concrete actions through using national and international instruments or conventions or laws to effect changes in societies, especially when their leaders are inept.

Oxford Dictionary explains activism as vigorous campaign to achieve a goal. Marchetti (2016) says that the use of the word is traceable to 1915 when Swedish activists challenged the neutrality of their country in World War I, although throughout history people have been challenging and rebelling against injustices. Activists must be law abiding, demonstrating responsible citizenry and educating the populace to look for constructive solutions to reform the society (Moyer, 2001). They can use all methods at their disposal such as social media, demonstration and distributing pamphlets, which are supported by international and national laws. Their focus should be to vigorously pursue a goal that can change the society which can be compared to the way Protestantism changed Christianity.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first section historically describes the origin and development of school education or rather intellectualism, showing instances of African attempts to decolonise education. The second section discusses how politics and economics control education and how decolonisation is hindered in Africa. The third section provides analysis and sketches the way forward.

1: Historical Background of the Origin and Development of Intellectualism

To get a glimpse on the origin of intellectualism, we turn to the history of the human race. Archaeological evidence shows that human beings first emerged on the earth's surface in Africa and therefore Africa is regarded as the cradle of human race (Smithsonian, 2024). As explained by Wiafe (2023), the original ancient name of Africa is *Alkebulan,* meaning the mother of humankind or the garden of Eden. The thinking human being, *homo sapiens,* lived in Africa and other places during the Stone Age period. Homo sapiens used stone tools and educated their offspring to use the same tools. The Sone Age period, as explained by Movius and Asdams (2024) began around 3.3 million years ago and ended between 4000 BCE and 2000 BCE. From stone tools, some advancements are provided by the ancient centres of civilisation. As noted by K'Odhiambo (2017), the four main centres are Mesopotamia (flourished 5000-3500 BCE), Egypt (flourished 4000-1000 BCE), India (flourished 3300-1300BCE) and China (flourished 2000-1000 BCE). Mesopotamia and Egypt are significant for the discussion. Mesopotamia developed a form of writing known as *cuneiform* around 3500 BCE and Egypt developed a form of writing known as *hieroglyphics* around 3000 BCE, manifesting education or intellectualism (The World Book Encyclopedia, 2001, Mark, 2022 and Tchakarov, 2019).

Egypt's civilisation produced Greek civilisation (James, 1954 and Socrates, 2018). Prominent Greek intellectuals such as Pythagoras, Thales, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, among others, learnt in Egypt (Osabutey-Aguedze, 1990, Nantambu, 2022 and Socrates, 2018). The first world known university was built at Thebes in Egypt around 1391 BCE during the reign of pharaoh Amenhotep III and this is where prominent Greeks learnt (Osabutey-Aguedze, 1990). The university was known as the Temple of Waset or the Grand Lodge. As explained by Henderson (1967), we need to credit Greeks as disseminators of knowledge and not as originators of knowledge since they disseminated the knowledge they obtained from Egypt. It is noted by Curtin, Fireman, Thompson and Vansina (1978) that Mesopotamia and Egypt mutually exchanged intellectual ideas.

The world received its education from Romans who preserved Greek civilisation and hence education is full of Greco-Roman concepts. Greek civilisation was dominant between 700 and 500 BCE, many years after civilisation in Mosopatamia, Egypt and other places (Crowder, Cootes and Snellgrove, 1970). Roman Empire was founded around 625 BCE. In 146 BCE it conquered the Greeks thus making Greece a province of the Roman Empire. Roman Empire was aggressive in destroying and subjugating many states, including African State of Carthage (present day Tunisia). A Roman Senator, Marcus Cato (234-149 BCE), used to end his speeches by stating, "Carthage must be destroyed" (Latin: *Carthago delenda est*) (Miles, 2021), and eventually Carthage was destroyed. This is an indication that Africa was a formidable force that had its own civilisation and relevant education. Rome fell in 476 CE and it survived in Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine) headquartered at Constantinople that eventually fell in 1453 to Ottoman Empire. Jesus Christ was born during the Roman reign and both Greco-Roman thought and Christianity laid the ground for Western education (K'Odhiambo, 2017).

As attested by the Bible, African contributions to education in both the Old Testament and the New Testament are immense. For example, the books of Genesis and Exodus contain various instances of African contributions which are educative (Boice, 2024). Moses who rescued the Israelites from Egypt was tutored by Egyptian priests at Heliopolis, one of the ancient cities dedicated to the sun god. St Mark of the New Testament, Clement of Alexandria and St Augustine of Hippo are some of the Africans who shaped Christian education. As explained by Osei (1964), three Popes of African descent: Victor (AD 189-199), Melchiades (AD 311-312) and St Gelasius (AD 496) were instrumental in the philosophy of Christian education. For example, Victor established the prestige of the papacy, sanctioned the celebration of Easter to be done on Sunday and initiated the celebration of Mass in Latin instead of Greek, thus promoting Latin education; Milchiades influenced the issuance of the edict of Milan by Emperor Constantine which ended Christian persecution and promoted freedom in all aspects including that of education; St Gelasius included in the Holy Bible the books of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Judith,

Tobit and the Maccabees which are fundamental in Christian philosophy of education. It is noted also by K'Odiambo (2010) that Muslim education started in North Africa, around 11th century. Butterworth (2022) indicates that Africans were Christians before the arrival of the white people. King Ezana of Ethiopia declared Christianity a national religion in 330 CE. The Ethiopian high official in Acts 8:26-40 is a testimony that Christian education was part and parcel of Africa.

In 14th and the 15th centuries, trade and voyages of discovery, started mainly by the Portuguese, enabled African coasts to experience foreign contacts that impacted on her education. Even if formal education did not exist in Africa, the intermingling of foreigners and the inhabitants was socially educative and this influenced Africa.

If Africa contributed to the development of Christianity, why were Africans not wholly comfortable with Christian missionary education? This question can be attempted although the answer may not be comprehensive enough. The introduction of formal education into the continent did not emphasise the historical origin of intellectualism. `The context under which African contributed to the development of Christianity with its attendant education was different from that in which formal Christian education was introduced in the continent. There was no continuity of educational ideals as propagated by the Church Fathers such as St Augustine of Hippo and St Mark of the New Testament with the educational ideals of the missionaries. Although Christian missionaries were the first to provide formal education in Africa, that education was not wholly accepted since its ideals were at variant with the ideals enunciated in the Bible (Spindelman and Crouch, 2023). For example, the ideal of universal love and equality of humankind was missing as exemplified in the Kongo Empire where Christians were chased away from the Empire because of their involvement in the slave trade (Almeida, 2021). Almeida explains that the first missionaries came to Africa in 1490 through the invitation of King Nzinga of Kongo (present day Angola, Gabon, DRC, and Republic of the Congo). By 1555 the missionaries had been chased away because of their behaviour which lured Africans to unacceptable norms. This shows that the overall cultural norms as propagated by the missionaries were unjustified in African contexts. This was decolonisation of education. The missionaries were chased away despite the fact that they had baptized some people including King Nzinga.

Education provided by missionaries was different from that one provided by the colonial government. The missionaries wanted to make Africans literate through evangelisation yet colonial government wanted Africans to learn skills to enable them work as clerks and artisans (Watras, 2014). Africans wanted education that can bring them at par with the Europeans (Watras). Consequently, education dominated debates in Europe and colonies.

As explained by Osei (1964), in 1903 France drew up education plan for her colonies in Africa. The plan emphasised uniform education in the colonies with the aim of assimilating Africans into the French culture, thus producing Black French people. Also the Belgian policy in the Congo was almost similar to that of France. Schools in Belgium were similar to schools in the Congo. The Portuguese and the Spanish reiterated similar education like that of France. The type of education emphasised was alienating Africans from their indigenous cultures and this was one of the reasons that prompted Africans to fight for independence so as to decolonise education.

In British East Africa Protectorate, the British government appointed Professor Nelson Fraser to study education (studocu.com). Fraser report of 1909 recommended that education should be provided along racial lines and Africans to get industrial and agricultural education since their brain capacity could not accommodate complex academic issues. African rejected this type of education and they wanted education that could make them to be equal with Europeans. This was in essence decolonisation of education.

After World War I, Africans demanded better education and Watras (2014) notes that the League of Nations recommended that education in Africa should help Africans to adapt to western technologies without sacrificing their culture. As explained by Urch (1971) British colonies did not have curriculum uniformity but each governor was free to decide on the system of education they wanted, unlike in Francophone, Belgian, Spanish and Portuguese Africa where education was a means of transforming Africans culturally.

As reported by Watras, around 1920s, reaction to colonial education imposed on Africa was demonstrated by some organised movements. Africans formed organisations such as Southern Rhodesia Bantu Voters' Association, Luo Young Kavirondo Association, Kikuyu Independent Schools Association to spearhead the type of education they wanted and this was an attempt to decolonise and Africanise education.

In 1920s the British government and missionaries invited Phelps-Stokes commission to survey education in Africa (Spindelman and Crouch, 2023). The commission visited Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Cameroon, Belgium Congo, Angola, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Nyasaland and Rhodesia. The commission recommended that the government and the missionaries to work together in providing education. Like Fraser commission, Phelps-Stokes commission resulted into racially segregated schools and low standard of education for Africans. Africans rejected this, thus agitating for decolonised education.

The De la Warr educational commission of 1937 was the first British policy for university education in tropical Africa (Ashby, 1965). The commission resulted into the establishment of Makerere University and it also

acted as a precursor to many African universities but the teaching introduced to these universities was and is still full of colonial epistemological and axiological perspectives that Africans are striving to decolonise (Odugu, 2023).

Africans in the continent including those in the diaspora have never favoured foreign education imposed on the continent as affirmed by congresses of black writers and artists (Sereme and Harcourt, 2021). The first congress was organised by Pan-Africanists in 1956 in Paris, France. The second congress was held in 1959 in Rome, Italy and the third congress was held in 1968 in Montreal, Canada. At these congresses African intellectuals reiterated their aversion to colonialism with all its associated knowledge systems. Leopold Seder Senghor, Aime Cesaire, Ahmed Sekou Toure and Frantz Fanon gave philosophic inspiring speeches geared towards true decolonisation of Africa. Fanon asserted that Africa must use all tools at her disposal to fight colonisation; Cesaire asserted that all the roots of colonisation planted in the African psyche and her institutions must be forcefully removed through revolution. Sekou Toure stated: We prefer poverty in freedom to riches in slavery. Senghor extolled the beauty of the black culture. The congresses called upon intellectuals to fight against colonisation of Africa manifested in intellectualism. Pan-Africanism birthed Afrocentricism or Afrocentrism, which is focused on African contribution to intellectualism

In 1962, a conference of African leaders was convened in Dakar, Senegal to decide which way Africa should go (Friedland and Rosberg, 1964). The conference inaugurated the "Philosophy of African Socialism" which each country was obligated to implement. Tanzania implemented African Socialism and termed it Ujamaa (Brotherhood). Ujamaa decolonised education and Africanised it. As a result, Tanzania faced many challenges of finance arising from IMF and the World Bank but Ujamaa and its educational ideals is a good study in decolonising education in Africa.

A contemporary serious attempt to Africanise education is the establishment of Afrocentric Education at Children in Freedom School in Nakuru, Kenya (Kasuku, 2022). The school was founded by Engineer Oku Kanayo Egbeni and Dr Utheri Kanayo (nee Susan Kirago) in 2018. The vision and the mission of the school are to: *"Reclaim Africa's glory on the global stage…design solutions that will change the local communities and the global world."* This is commendable since it is a practical way of decolinising the curriculum in Africa and it requires continental support.

Although decolonisation of education in Africa spans centuries, towards the end of the 20th century, Wingfield (2020) notes that Steve Biko's (1946-1977) idea of black consciousness, decolonisation thesis by Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) and resistance to dehumanisation of black people provided momentum to decolonisation of education. In this century, Agherdien, Pillay, Dube and Masinga (2022) state that the hushtags: "fees must fall" and "Rhodes must fall" accelerated the call for a decolonised higher education. Agherdien et al. explain that the hushtags combined with the emergence of covid-19 made Africans realise that "epistemic traditions of the global south" are not relevant to Africa yet they shape universities in Africa. Also, as explained by Naude (2023), Covid-19 travel ban on Africans by the developed world reignited colonial prejudices and exposed African ineptitude in improving her health care services since leaders had the habit of travelling overseas for treatment, leaving poorly equipped home hospitals for the general populace. The ban made African leaders realise that they need to focus on the development of their countries.

Agherdien et al. further explain that on March 9, 2015 at the University of Cape Town, Chumani Maxwell threw human faeces at the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, joining the chorus of "Rhodes must fall". The fall of Rhodes was significant in ending racism and education coloniality in Africa. Rhodes must fall spread to many universities in the world including Oxford where Ntokozo Qwabe was one of its leaders. On October 12, 2015, students protested at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa demanding "fees must fall." This protest spread to the University of Cape Town and Rhodes University, accelerating the move for a decolonised education.

What appropriate action should we take to decolonise education in Africa? Can we take up weapons and fight our African leaders just in the same way we fought colonialists and enabled Africa to get independence? Can we succeed in whatever course of action taken when we do not have both the economic and political power?

2: The Role of Economics and Politics in Education and Issues that Hinder the Decolonisation of Education in Africa

How economics and politics control education, including issues that hinder the decolonisation of education in Africa are discussed here. Economics deals with how human beings identify scarce resources and then use their creativity and innovation to produce commodities which are distributed amongst people (Khumalo, 2012) whereas politics, as explained by Harold Lasswell (1902-1978), is concerned with the use of power in public life to influence a society's decision on who gets what, when, where, how and why (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). Both economics and politics are usually inseparable with issues of decolonisation of education. In the words of Karl Marx, economics controls the world (Oruka, 1997). Africans waged wars and achieved "sham"

political independence from colonialists but not economic and the fight for economic and true political independence still continues. African countries are controlled by those with economic and political power. A typical example occurred in Kenya in 1991 when economic sanction was imposed and as a result Kenya accepted multiparty politics (Lynch,2024).

Education requires money. Are Africans ready to provide that money? As explained by K'Odhiambo (2018), five thematic areas of education launched by African Union in 2011 as Pan African Universities are: Pan African University Institute for Water and Energy Sciences (including climate change) (PAUWES), based at Abou Kekr Belkaid University of Tlemcen in Algeria and it is supported by the German Government; Pan African University Institute for Life and Earth Sciences (including health and agriculture) (PAUILES), based at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and it is supported by the Indian Government; Pan African University Institute of Governance, Humanities and Social Science (PAUIGHSS), based at the University of Yaonde, Cameroon and it is supported by the Swedish Government; Pan African University Institute for Basic Sciences and Innovation (PAUIBSI), based at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya and it is supported by the Japanese Government, and Pan African University Institute for Space Sciences (PAUISS), planned to be based at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa. When foreign assistance is sought in any educational endeavour then decolonising or Africanising education becomes unattainable venture that fits endless conferences or workshops.

The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (known also as the Bretton Woods institutions) control budgets for every country and have representatives in every country. The 2024 Finance Bill in Kenya that triggered protests and deaths was influenced by the WB and IMF (Kizito, 2024). The IMF-backed austerity measures also prompted Kenyans in US to protest at the IMF headquarters. Bretton Woods institutions have been accused of unfettered power that does not have checks and balances.

Politics controls education. John Dewey says that whilst philosophers introspect, bully sinners continue to rule the world (Ozmon and Craver, 1999). In Africa, as reported by K'Odhiambo (2018), elections are controlled and funded by foreigners and after elections funders demand their share in terms of investments. In such a scenario, very little is accomplished by African leaders, thus showing African political independence is a sham. If those wielding political power in Africa cannot control education, what can a mere citizen do?

Economic resources such as minerals are owned by neo-colonialists termed "multinational companies" together with African politicians resulting in a scenario where Africans do not economically and politically own their countries (Harmon, 2024). Benefits that accrue from minerals are taken outside African countries and banked in safe banks overseas leaving the continent much poorer. Sometimes having a mineral like oil is a curse since it results in corruption, environmental degradation and underdevelopment, just as exemplified in the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria in 1995 (Britannica, 2024). Multinational companies and African politicians do not have decolinisation of the curriculum as an item on their agenda, unless for hoodwinking the populace.

Decolonising education requires research but researches in Africa are erratically and unsustainably funded by foreigners where sometimes principal investigators did not even conceive of the problems in the first place (Caelers and Okoth, 2023). In some instances, African researchers conceive of the research problems and because they lack funds they liaise with foreign researchers who fund the researchers and take over as principal investigators. Such scenarios relegate Africans to the periphery and only participate as help hands. African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) which comprises 16 African universities with a focus on research, was launched in 2015 and is assisted by Carnegie Corporation of New York, Kresge and Mellon Foundations (ARUA, nd). What can citizens in Africa do to force their governments to allocate enough funds for their researchers so that foreign dependency is minimised? Can education be decolonised if Africa does not fund her own education researches?

Most educated and brainy individuals in Africa do not find it easy to contribute to the development of their countries and this has resulted into brain drain of which the benefits are debatable (Ilasco, 2024 and Young, 2024). These highly skilled people leave their countries of origin mainly because of political turmoil. What can be done if African leaders cannot organise their elites to develop Africa?

Funds for reviewing curricula in Africa come from outside mainly from the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose leaders are traditionally Americans (Bach, 2024). Amin (2014) says that the WB prescribes what to be taught in social sciences in African universities, ending up downplaying relevant African knowledge. How would the WB and IMF perceive any request to decolonise education in Africa? Funders of curricula in Africa may have much say on what to include or not to include in the curricula. Laakso and Audi (2023) say that African heroes and heroines are left out. According to Afrocentric scholarship, Imhotep (lived around 2625 BCE) is the father of medicine and not Hippocrates (460-377 BCE); Munetho (lived during 3rd century BCE) is the father of history and not Herodotus (c. 484-420 BCE). Although Herodotus lived before Munetho, their contributions should be compared and contrasted in African education curricula. Hatshepsut (died 1458 BCE) who was the most famous female pharaoh is not taught in African institutions.

Issues that hinder decolonisation of education in Africa are many and varied. If we take, for instance, other recent African heroes like Tom Mboya, Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmed Sekou Toure, we find that their rich ideas do not form part of the curriculum in African universities (Laakso and Adu, 2023). One of Ahmed Sekou Toure's sayings goes: "An African statesman is not a naked boy begging from rich capitalists." If the continent's heroes do not form our university curriculum, how can we accomplish decolonisation of education in Africa?

Laakso also notes that age bureaucracy, governments' lack of support, reconciling decolonial ambitions with the market demands, lack of literature on decolonization, dependence on foreigners, lack of topics on decolonisation in official curricula, and lack of African organisations to gauge quality and rank universities, amongst others, hinder decolonisation of education in Africa. Publication of books on decolonisation, note Laakso and Adu, is hindered by lack of market. Very few Africans have books on decolonisation in foreign libraries.

Most sponsors for education in Africa are not Africans. For example, American philanthropic sponsors of education include Carnegie Corporation, Phelps-Stokes Fund, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Melinda and Belinda Gates (Mfum-Mensah, 2019). These philanthropies have enhanced social stratification in Africa through education systems that cannot be decolonised but wrongly termed progress. How can you decolonise education if you cannot sponsor it?

Determination of quality of education in universities is not decided by Africans (Laakso and Adu, 2023). Reconciling requirements of the job market and the attempts to decolonise education are antagonising ventures (Laakso and Adu). For example, marketable courses strain lecturers and leave them with little time for research. How can one who does not do research lead in decolonisation of education?

Curriculum approvers in Africa are the greatest problem (Matemba, 2021). People responsible for the approval of curriculum in Africa were trained in foreign countries and some were sponsored for their education by foreign philanthropies and such people probably have little idea on decolonisation of education curriculum in Africa.

Educated Africans who are economically able and can direct activities in Africa as role models do not participate in the decolonisation of the curriculum since they suffer from Europhilia (desiring goods and services from Europe) and xenophilia (desiring foreign goods and services) (Nyamnjoh, 2004). Desiring for foreign goods and services by African educated elite instills in the minds of the learners that what comes from outside is the best. Since they are economically and politically able, their behaviour misdirects the continent. Because of their behavior, every individual learning in Africa strives to imitate Europhilics and xenophiulics. How can education get decolonised if an idea provided by an African is not taken seriously but when the same idea is provided by a European then it is taken seriously. A recent example in Kenya when Adani Group intended to take control of the management of Jomo Kenyatta International Airport suffices. Kenyan citizens did not want Adani Group to take over the management of the Airport and petitioned the Kenya government but the government was adamant. Strangely enough, when the US discredited Adani Group for such an undertaking, the government rescinded her decision, stopped Adani Group and called it quits (Al Jazeera, Nov. 21, 2024). Is it only possible to listen in Africa when some other foreign power speaks but not the citizens? How many African leaders do their shopping overseas, bypassing their local markets? How can education be decolonised in such situations? As suggested by Oelofsen (2015) and noted by K'Odhiambo (2018), for decolonisation of education to succeed in Africa, first the intellectual landscape must be decolonised. Osei (1967) says the people of Africa must be re-educated, otherwise the continent cannot progress.

Recognition of talented Africans is abysmal as reported by K'Odhiambo (2018). There is lack of support for innovative and creative minds that can play a leading role in decolonising education in Africa. A few examples suffice:

i) Maurice Tito Gachamba (1938-) of Kenya built a helicopter and flew it in 1968. He went to President Jomo Kenyatta with a hope that he would be recognised and given opportunity to make air planes. The President directed him to go to Wilson Airport and do wiring. He was disgusted and went back to his garage at Nyeri. During President Uhuru Kenyatta's and William Ruto's regime he strived and assembled a vehicle tagged UhuRutu but this also did not give him any recognition. Gachamba became a school drop-out because he could not add 16 and 4 to make 20.

ii) Samuel Gatonye from Nyahururu, Kenya, made two four-wheel tuk-tuk cars and showcased them at the Devolution Conference in Laikipia in2019 but no one has recognised him or given him funds for further modification or mass production of the cars.

iii) Onesmas Mwangi of Kenya assembled a helicopter in 2013 but was warned never to fly it and no one has recognised him. Mwangi was a primary school drop-out.

iv) Asmelash Zerefu of Ethiopia built a helicopter in 2001 but was denied a chance to enroll in an aviation college because of his height.

v) Daniel Chingoma of Zambabwe built a helicopter "Zimcopter" in 2003 but he was accorded no recognition.

vi)   Mubarak Muhammed Abdullahi, a Nigerian physics student, built a helicopter and was not recognized, and moreover was denied a chance to showcase it at the 2007 Nigerian Independence Day.

vii)   Felix Kambwiri of Malawi built a helicopter in 2016 but he has not been recognised and he has not been allowed to fly.

viii)   Gun makers in Africa are tortured, maimed or jailed.

If such talented individuals cannot be recognised by African governments, what is the essence of decolonising education? Even if what these people make is rudimentary, the innovations greatly inspire learners and the general public.

3: Analysis and the way forward

If the citizens are not satisfied with the education provided, they can protest and this is allowed by international conventions, regional laws and national laws. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 allows for protests and activism, so long as they are done within the confines of the law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, Articles 18 to 21 deal with exercising one's freedom which includes working with others or alone to petition the authorities. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Committee is responsible for monitoring the ICCPR. Also the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights supports activism. The same is also supported by the Constitution of Kenya (2010), Chapter Four: The Bill of Rights, Section 37 which states:

"Every person has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket, and to present petitions to public authorities."

In order to decolonise education in Africa, we need to limit conferences/workshops on the same. Karl Marx asserted that change can only come through revolution or wars but not intellectual contemplation (Ozmon and Craver, 1999). Africa should not hold conferences on decolonising education continuously but must fight against coloniality with the same vigour they fought colonialism. During the fight against colonialism, conferences were held to augment armed struggle.

When some organisation accepts to donate funds for conferences but not for activism, then that fund should be rejected. Africa should donate money for her conferences and desist from depending on foreign donors. Conferences lull people's mind from taking concrete actions. Innumerable conferences make people end up being *arm chair revolutionaries*.

From the historical perspectives and the influence of politics and economics, Africa has attempted to decolonise education. Failure arises from African leaders who collude with multinationals to defraud citizens of their rights. There is no rationale for African countries to have poor infrastructure coupled with social services after many years of independence and in spite of abundance resources. Infrastructure and good social services can deter brain drain.

Citizens cannot sit back and watch helplessly when their rulers allocate meagre percentage of the national budget to research. Citizens as the tax payers should demand through activism the right amount to be allocated for the research, say 2% of the national budget. The researchers must be accountable and the research findings must be published. The process of research must be transparent to seal loopholes of corruption. There is no rationale why Africa should be supported in her research by donors. In donor funded research, it is truer to suggest that the influence of the funder cannot be ruled out. How many African organisations are funding researches outside Africa?

Which African organisation is responsible for the ranking of universities? African universities strive to achieve better ranking not as they believe but as perceived by some other person. In such a scenario, decolonisation of education is a mirage that is tantalising only for futile intellectual discourses. For staff promotions, African universities demand that members of their academic staff are to publish in reputable international journals yet most of these reputable journals are owned by foreigners. African universities should be responsible for developing reputable journals.

Analysis cannot be exhaustive but what is provided above can point direction for activism. Activism may be disruptive and cannot be always supported by leaders. What activists can lean on are international, regional and national instruments.

II.   Conclusion

This paper calls upon citizens of Africa, especially the youth to be activists and demand the right education whereby knowledge is based on African experiences. Relevant knowledge from without Africa is welcome and should be in tune with African aspirations. Africans governments are to be made to account to the

tax payers the relevance of education offered. Contracts made between African leaders and other countries or organisations must benefit the citizens' education, otherwise citizens to resort to activism and demand their rights.

References

[1]. African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA). ARUA concept. Retrieved from https://www.arua.org on 5 January, 2024.

[2]. Agherdien, N., Pillay, R., Dube, N. and masinga, P. (2022). What does decolonising education mean to us? Educator reflections. Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning 6(1), pp.55-78. DOI: 10.36615/sotls.v6i1.204

[3]. Al Jazeera. (2024, Nov. 21). Kenya cancels more than $2.5bn in deals with Adani after US indictment. Retrieved from https://www.aljeera.com on 12 December, 2024.

[4]. Almeida, C. (2021). Christianity in Kongo. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.641

[5]. Amin, S. (2014). Understanding the political economy of contemporary Africa. Africa

[6]. Development, Vol. 39, No.1, Special Issue on CODESRIA's 40th Anniversary (2014), pp. 15-36. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/24484674

[7]. Ashby, E. (1965). A contribution to the dialogue on African universities. Clare College: Cambridge.

[8]. Bach, N. (2019). Why the World Bank president has always been an American. Retrieved from https://ww w.fortune.com on 26 December, 2024.

[9]. Basedau, M. (2020). Rethinking African studies: Four challenges and the case for comparative African studies. African Spectrum 2020, Vol. 55(2), pp. 194-206. DOI: 10.1177/0002039720945328

[10]. Boice, J. M. (2024). Moses' early education: Exodus 2:11-25. Retrieved from https://m.alliancenet.org on 25 November, 2024.

[11]. Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2024, November 6). Ken Saro-Wiwa. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ken-Saro-Wiwa

[12]. Butterrworth, A. (2022). African Christianity thrived, long before white men arrived. Retrieved from https://www.africathegospelcoliation.org 29 December, 2024.

[13]. Caelers, D. and Okoth, D. (2023). Research funding in Africa: Navigating sustainability and shifting perspectives. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1038/d44148-023-00360-4 on 27 December, 2024.

[14]. Crowder, M.; Cootes, R.J., and Snellgrove, L.E. (1970). Ancient times: A junior history for Africa. London: Longman.

[15]. Curtin, P.; Fireman, S.; Thompson, L.; and Vansina, J. (1978). African history. London: Little Brown and Company (Inc).

[16]. Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2025). Harold Lasswell work. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com on 7 January, 2025.

[17]. Friedland, W. H. and Rosber, C. G. (Eds) (1964). African socialism. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

[18]. Harmon, W. Q. (2024). Liberia: Cartel leader Gao Feng indicted for illicit mining, tax evasion.

[19]. Liberian Observer. Retrieved from allafrica.com on 13 November, 2024.

[20]. Henderson, S.V.P. (1967). Introduction to philosophy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[21]. Ilasco, I. (2024). Effects of brain drain in developing countries. Retrieved from https://www.developmentaid.org on 20 December, 2024.

[22]. James, G.G.M. (1954). Stolen Legacy: Greek philosophy is stolen Egyptian philosophy. George G.M. Jaes.

[23]. Kasuku, M. (2022). Afrocentric education at children in freedom. Retrieved from https://www.kenyabuzz.com on 6 September, 2024.

[24]. Khumalo, B. (2012). Defining economics in the twenty first century. Modern Economy, 2012, 3, 597-607. Retrieved from https://dx.doi.org/10.4236/me.2012.35079

[25]. Kizito, P. (16th July, 2024). Kenya in the US demand accountability from government, IMF over protest killings. Retrieved from https://www.allafrica.com on 24 October, 2024.

[26]. K'Odhiambo, A.K. (2018). Analysis of the determinants that impede decolonizing the mind for a transformative education in Africa. A paper presented at Ist International Conference on Decolonising Education held at Embu University 6th-8th June, 2018.

[27]. K'Odhiambo, A.K. (2017). Teacher inclusive practices in the light of changing pedagogical techniques in higher education. In: Ismail Hussein Amzat and Nena Padilla-Valdez (Eds), Teacher professional knowledge and development for reflective and inclusive practices. London: Roultledge.

[28]. K'Odhiambo, A.K.; Khanini, B.S.; and Njogu, G.N. (2017). Hermeneutics of Pythagoreanism in relation to the historicity of holistic African philosophy of education that starts from Egypt. International Journal of Education and Research, Vol.5 No.1, pp. 285-298.

[29]. K'Odhiambo, A.K. (2010). Argument for a historical foundation for African philosophy of education. Horizons: The Consolata Institute of Philosophy Journal, Vol. 1.

[30]. Laakso, L. and Adu, K. H. (2023). The unofficial curriculum is where the real teaching takes place: Faculty experiences of decolonizing the curriculum in Africa. Higher Education (2024) 87: 185-200 https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01000-4

[31]. Lynch, G. (2024, July 22, allafrica.com). Kenya's former president Daniel Arap Moi mastered the art of silencing critics.

[32]. Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On the coloniality of being: Contribution on the development of a concept. Cultural Studies Vol. 21, Nos.2-3, pp. 240-270 DOI: 10.1080/09502380601162548

[33]. Mampane, M. R., Omidire, F. and Aluko, R. (2018). Decolonising higher education in Africa: Arriving at a glocal solution. South African Journal of Education 38(4): 1-9. DOI: 10.15700/saje.v38n4a1636

[34]. Marchetti, G. (2016). Activism. Journal of Chinese Cinemas, Vol. 10, No.1, 4-37.

[35]. Mark, J.J. (2022).World history encyclopedia, cuneiform. Retrieved from https://worldhistory.org on 20 August, 2024.

[36]. Matemba, Y. (2021). Decolonising religious education in Sub-Saharan Africa through the prismof anticolonialism: A conceptual proposition. British Journal of Religious Education, Vol. 43, No. 1, 33-46. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2020.1816529

[37]. Mfum-Mensah, O. (2019). International organisations and education. Bulgarian Education Comparative Society, pp. 71-77.

[38]. Mignolo, W.D. (2017). Coloniality is far from over, and so must be decoloniality. Retrieved from https://www.journals.uchicago.edu on 30 November, 2024.

[39]. Miles, R. (2021). Carthage must be destroyed: The rise and fall of an ancient civilization. Gildan Audio and Blackstore.

[40]. Movius, H. L. and Adams, R. M. (2024). Stone Age. Encyclopeadia Britannica. Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com on 7 December, 2024.

[41]. Moyer, B. (2001). The four roles of social activism. Retrieved from https://newsociety.com/books/d/doing-democracy on 7 December, 2024.

[42]. Naude, B. (2023). Covid-19 travel bans and the reactivation of colonial trauma in Africa. International Affairs, Volume 99, Issue 3, pp.1109-1126. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiad088

[43]. Nyamnjoh, F. (2004). Relevant education for African development: Some epistemological considerations. African Development, Vol. XXIX, No. 1.

[44]. Nyere, C. (2023). The global covid-19 pandemic: The politics of science or the science of politics.

[45]. African Journal of Political Science, Volume II, Number 1, June 2023, pp. 29-41.

[46]. Odugu, D. I. (2023). Education in Africa: A critical historiographic review. History of Education, Vol. 52, Nos 2-3, 220-245. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760x.2023.2182914

[47]. Oelofsen, R. (2015). Decolonising Africa and the intellectual landscape. Phronimon, Vol.16, No.2.

[48]. Omanga, D. (2020). Decolonization, decoloniality, and the future of African studies with Dr Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni. Retrieved from https:www.items.ssrc.org on December 2, 2024.

[49]. Oruka, H.O. (1997). Practical philosophy: In search of an ethical minimum. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

[50]. Osabutey-Agueddze, Isaac D. 1990. The principles underlying the African religion and philosophy: A text book on the aesthetics of the black man. Nairobi: Mailu Publishing House.

[51]. Osei, G.K. (1964). Fifty unknown facts about the African with complete proof. London: Gabriel K. Osei.

[52]. Osei, G.K. (1967). The African: His antecedents, his genius, and his destiny. London: The African Publication Society.

[53]. Ozmon, H.A. and Craver, S.M. (1995). Philosophical foundations of education. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

[54]. Sereme, R. and Harcourt, B. E. (2021). Background on the congresses of black writers and artists (1956-1959). Retrieved from https://blogs.law.columbia.educ on December 12, 2024.

[55]. Smithsonian (National Museum of Human History). (2024). Introduction to human evolution. Retrieved from https://humanorigins.si.edu on October 7, 2024

[56]. Socrates, E. (2018). Restoring the African origins of philosophy. Retrieved from Phoenix Files UDC 1(109) on 6 December, 2024

[57]. Spindelman, D. and Crouch, L. (2023). Purpose of education in former British African colonies: From contestation to bureaucratization. Retrieved from https://osf.io on 23 November 2024.

[58]. Studocu.com (nd). Fraser commission. Retrieved from https://www.studocu.com on 3 October 2024.

[59]. Tchavarov, V. (2019). The history of Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Rosetta Stone. Retrieved from https://www.collector.com on 7 October, 2024.

[60]. World book encyclopedia (2001), Vol.6, E. p.97: Chicago: World Book Inc.

[61]. Nantambu, N. (2022). Getting world history right: Real African history Retrieved from https://www.trinicenter.com on October 7, 2024.

[62]. Urch, G. E. (1971). Education and colonialism in Kenya. History of Education Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1971), pp. 249-264. Cambridge University Press.

[63]. Wa Thiong'o, N. (187). Decolonising the mind. Harare: Harare Publishing House.

[64]. Watras, J. (2014). From colonialism to developing countries: Surveys and educational reforms in British Tropical Africa, 1910-1990. Pedagogica Historica, Vol. 55, Nos. 1-2, 72-78. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2014.997748

[65]. Wiafe, E. (2023). African indigenous epistemologies, traditions, and practices before the arrival of the Europeans. Educational Considerations, Vol. 49, No.2(2023), Art 4. DOI: 10.4148/0146-9282.2362

[66]. Wingfield, C. (2020). On doing decolonial education. Retrieved from chriswingfield.co.uk on 10 December, 2024.

[67]. Young, J. (2024). Brain drain: Definition, causes, effects and examples. Retrieved from https://www.evestopedia.com on 11 September, 2024.