EDUCATION FOR ALL? THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL IN PUBLIC POLICY MAKING IN AFRICA

This seminar will focus on Africa, education, and public policy:

34 million primary school age children in sub-Saharan Africa are not in school. Why?

Meeting in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, the world committed itself to achieving Education for All by 2000. Funding agencies promised major new resources. Governments reaffirmed their intentions. The major follow up meeting in Dakar in April, 2000, provided a sobering picture—notwithstanding promising initiatives, education for all seemed no closer—and reset the major target dates to 2015. Alas, not. For some African countries, education for all remains a distant dream. The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015, have reset the target once again, to 2030.

This seminar will explore the trajectory of post-colonial education in Africa, both promises and accomplishments. The aspirations have been high, and the initial progress was dramatic. African countries have been the sites of many imaginative innovations in teaching and learning. Yet, the pace of that initial progress was not sustained. Indeed, in some countries enrollments and literacy seemed to decline. Why?

We will address these puzzles by exploring education policy and the policy making process in contemporary Africa.

Public policy is about choices and about how choices are made. Every political system must deal with conflicting interests and preferences, many strongly felt, passionately articulated, and forcefully defended. Public policy both reflects and shapes those conflicts. Often, alternative and incompatible policy directions may seem equally attractive. How, then, is one path chosen over the others? Studying policy and policy making in Africa, therefore, is an exploration of how communities and countries determine their political and development agendas in settings where resources are severely constrained.

Public policy, of course, is not a fixed target. As well, it is important to recognize multiple meanings of policy and to distinguish among intentions, rhetoric, and practice. It is also important to understand that policies result from non-decisions as well as decisions. That is, often the most sharply contested issues are those that determine what is on the agenda. Some perspectives, some interests, and some policy preferences are effectively rejected by exclusion: they are never formally considered.

For education policy we will ask: What are the key issues? What—in practice, whose—interests are at stake? Who are the activists, both individual and collective? How are demands articulated? How is the conflict among goals resolved (or deflected or managed)? How does addressing those conflicts itself modify the policy making process?

The seminar’s major task will thus be explorations in comparative public policy in Africa. Its approach will be issue-oriented, analytic, historical, and cross-disciplinary. Selected case studies will permit detailed analysis and attention to common themes.

This seminar has no prerequisites and will not assume particular prior knowledge or experiences. In the expectation that students will have diverse backgrounds and different level of familiarity with Africa, the seminar will enable participants to develop their own interests and their expertise. For those who have already worked on Africa, this seminar will provide opportunities to extend and refine their analysis.

Organization

This course will be organized as a seminar. We will meet weekly. I shall take responsibility for introducing the topics, reviewing relevant literature, and suggesting appropriate readings. Class participants
will share responsibility for the content and conduct of the seminar, including summarizing and criticizing their readings, commenting on colleagues’ work, and suggesting paths for developing the topics we discuss.

To strengthen the empirical grounding for our discussions and to encourage collaborative work, seminar participants will select early in the Quarter a country—Ghana, Kenya, Sénégal, or Uganda—on which to concentrate throughout the course. Each seminar participant will thus have two vantage points on the topics considered: that of Africa and public policy making in general and that of a particular African country. As the Quarter progresses, seminar participants will focus part of their effort on their country of concentration, including developing a relevant bibliography, doing supplementary reading, and sharing their puzzles, observations, and insights with other class members.

Since the Memorial Day holiday reduces the regularly scheduled class meetings, to permit presentations of class participants’ work, we will need to schedule an additional session.

Students whose documented disability may require an academic accommodation should contact the Student Disability Resource Center (Office of Accessible Education): 563 Salvatierra Walk (723-1066, 723-1067 TTY).

Requirements

A seminar is the product of its participants. Hence, each participant will share in the responsibility for the direction and conduct of the seminar, as well as completing her/his own individual work. This course is available for 3 or 5 units.

All students will be expected to do the necessary reading for the course, both from the works suggested in the syllabus and from sources they locate themselves. All students will be expected as well to participate in the seminar's collective effort, including reporting on particular readings, presenting their own ideas and insights, and providing feedback to their colleagues. To reinforce the collaborative nature of our work, students will comment online on each week's topic.

The assignments for this seminar will be both individual and collective. Each will build on the previous work. Seminar participants will prepare a brief education profile of the country they are studying, analyze an education policy issue in that country (students enrolled for 3 units will not prepare this paper), and develop an analysis of external roles in education policy in that country. Those assignments will have collective counterparts: seminar participants working on each country will present to the class an integrated country education profile, an integrated overview of education policy making, and an integrated analysis of external roles in the education policy process. In sum, course writing requirements are a brief initial overview and one (3 units) or two (5 units) analytic papers, as well as group work focused on the countries we are studying. There are no examinations.

Graduate students enrolled in African Studies 211 will receive supplementary instructions for their written work and will meet periodically to extend class discussions and analyses.

This seminar will require initiative, self-direction, and collective responsibility on the part of each participant. Each individual's own work is intended to contribute to a collective product. For that to be possible, each individual's own work must be thorough, creative, and timely.

Except by special arrangement, written work will be expected when due and will not be accepted after the last class meeting.

Readings

Several sorts of readings are necessary for this class: broad overviews of major events and actors, analyses of specific issues and interactions in African history, politics, and society, and empirical studies of particular people, places, and events.

All seminar participants will also be expected to review a set of basic readings for each seminar topic, available as a Course Reader. The AS 111/211 Course Reader will be ordered online from University Readers and shipped directly. Placing an order provides immediate electronic access to the first 30% of the Course Reader in pdf format. Students order online at https://students.universityreaders.com/store/.
Additional readings will be available on course reserve in Green Library (some materials may be in Cubberley Library) or on the course web site in Canvas (canvas.stanford.edu).

Reading for this course must be critical and analytical. Since the assigned readings are entry points to the topics considered, class participants will be expected to develop their own supplementary reading lists.

Readings for each topic are listed in the schedule of seminar sessions. Since some important sources, especially those we identify during the Quarter, may not be on library reserve, seminar participants will need to locate them in the general library collections or online and share them with other class members.

Let me know immediately if needed sources seem to be unavailable.

Since an important goal of the course is to enable students to develop their skills in finding and using relevant research, seminar participants will be expected to supplement those suggested readings with other materials relevant to the topics considered and to the countries on which they focus.

Studying contemporary Africa requires regular use of both electronic and print sources. Course assignments and discussions will therefore encourage students to develop their electronic searching and locating skills for sources available in both print and electronic form. Since all students have access to online sources, with the exception of a few especially important documents, sources available online will not be added to library reserve. Electronic sources, however, will not in themselves provide a sufficient foundation for our seminar’s work. Even as the volume of material available online increases, printed publications—books, scholarly articles, and government documents—will remain important.

The list of seminar sessions, topics, and dates, along with suggested readings, is attached. The materials included in Course Reader are marked ć. The materials available electronically on the course web site are marked ŕ. The lists of readings for each theme are of course themselves introductions to broad topics and themes. Course participants will need, therefore, to develop the skills of addressing a list that contains more readings than can be accomplished within a single week and that must be supplemented by additional readings selected by each individual. Those skills include: identifying quickly the major thrust of the argument presented in an article or book; surveying the contents of a book through its preface, introduction, table of contents, and initial and concluding chapters; associating authors with particular schools of thought and/or methodologies; reading for a narrowly defined purpose; building on reading previously done; and sharing reading responsibilities with other class members. Each week, each class member will need to make judicious choices about what to read and how to read it.

Evaluation and Grading

The primary criteria for grading will be both individual progress (in mastery of the course themes and relevant literature and in critical, analytic, and synthetic skills) throughout the Quarter and contribution to the collective effort of the class. Thus, no student will be disadvantaged by a relatively more limited background at the outset. Since collaboration with others in the class is essential to our approach, outstanding work must be reflected in both papers and class participation.

Written work will be evaluated as it is submitted. I am happy to meet with seminar participants to supplement the written evaluations.

This course will require a substantial independent and self-sustained effort, as well as a creative contribution to a collective enterprise. For those who accept that challenge, the course should prove demanding, involving, and rewarding.
Schedule of Seminar Sessions

Note on schedule: Since we miss one week for the Memorial Day holiday (28 May), we will schedule a special session in Week 9 or 10 to present and discuss final papers.

Note on readings: The readings listed below are found in several places. Some are in the course reader (\textsuperscript{R}) or on the course web site (\textsuperscript{WS}). Unless otherwise specified, journal articles are available to the Stanford community through the Stanford library. Some books are available online (URLs indicated below), while others are on course reserve in Green or Cubberley Library. Studying Africa requires becoming skilled in finding relevant resources.

Introduction: Education for All as Public Policy

Education in Africa I: Aspirations and Accomplishments (2 April)

Meeting in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, nearly all of the world's countries and most of the major international organizations committed themselves to achieving Education for All. The World Bank and other funding agencies promised major new resources. Governments reaffirmed their intentions. The major follow up meeting in Dakar in April, 2000, provided a sobering picture and reset the major target dates to 2015. What has been the trajectory of post-colonial education in Africa, both promises and accomplishments? Why? Our principal concerns in this initial session are to introduce the course content and organize the seminar, to explore the interests of course participants, and to begin to address general issues of approach and method in the study of education policy in contemporary Africa.

\textsuperscript{R} Rosa Maria Torres, \textit{One Decade of Education for All: The Challenge Ahead} (Buenos Aires: IIIEP/UNESCO, 2000), Introduction and Chapter II ("Education for All: The Proposal"), pp. 5-19

\textsuperscript{R} Merilee S. Grindle, and John W. Thomas, \textit{Public Choices and Policy Change: The Political Economy of Reform in Developing Countries} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1991), Chapter 2 ("Linking Theory and Practice"), pp. 18–42


Supplementary readings


Education in Africa II: Challenges and Constraints (9 April)

We continue our review of education in contemporary Africa, with particular attention to what are regarded as the most promising initiatives and the most pressing problems. Seminar participants should be prepared to discuss education—both history and current situation—in their countries of concentration.


Review the current state of education in your country of concentration.
supplementary readings


Use this session to refine your skills in using the web to study public policy in Africa, specifically education. Find sources that explain the initial Education for All meeting (Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990) and the World Education Forum follow up meetings (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000; Incheon, Republic of Korea, May 2015) . What, exactly, is the commitment to Education for All? Who is committed? What has been the progress since 1990? You might begin with UNESCO’s main education for all web site <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all>, the EFA Global Monitoring Reports <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/allreports>, and a major web site of the non-governmental organizations active on this issue: <http://www.campaignforeducation.org/>. Look too at UNESCO’s SDG data collections: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx>.


Education is often the most contested of public policies. That permits us to see more clearly who are the major participants and to explore their strategies and tactics. That also enables us to understand better what—and whose—interests are involved. As we do so, we need to be careful to distinguish policy-as-intention, policy-as-formal-pronouncement, policy-as-rules, and policy-as-practice. We need as well to consider the challenges to the common model of policy and policy making as rational and linear.


Challenges to the rational policy making model:

Country Education Profiles due
Making Education Policy II: Quantifying Education Planning and Practice; Paths to Privatization (23 April)

We have two major concerns today. The first is the pressure to quantify, from education planning to objectives, to pedagogy, to monitoring and evaluation. The effort to improve research, monitoring, and analysis has vastly increased the number of studies and reports that countries are expected to undertake. Most embed, but rarely justify, particular approaches and tools. Funding agreements often require a detailed education sector analysis (more recently those studies may be incorporated in sector investment program and poverty strategy reduction documents). The second concerns the gap between the funding needed to achieve education for all and the resources available in most African countries. Can privatization close that gap, as its advocates ardently insist?

On the pressure to quantify and the roles and problems of big data—

- Joel Samoff, “Education sector analysis in Africa: limited national control and even less national ownership,” *International Journal of Educational Development* 19,4-5 (July-September 1999): 249-272

On the influential role of the economics of education—


On the global pressure to privatize education—


All class participants should find and review the education policy/education strategy statement and the education section of the PRSP for the country they are studying.

---------------------------------------------- supplementary readings ----------------------------------------------


Making Education Policy III: Case Studies (30 April)

We turn today to case studies of making education policy. As usual, I shall report on Tanzania, and seminar participants will report on a specific education policy in their countries of concentration.


Country Education Policy Case Studies [students enrolled for 5 units] due

International Influences I: Aid Dependence and the Institutionalization of International Influence (7 May)

Pulled by popular pressure and pushed by the need for highly educated and skilled personnel, education can quickly become an insatiable demand for resources. Especially as economic crises succeeded earlier developmental optimism and structural adjustment replaced rapid development as the realistic short term objective in African countries, there was strong pressure to assign the highest priority for available funds to directly productive activities, which often did not include education. How then to educate the teachers, or develop new textbooks, or equip the science laboratories? Or more commonly, how to fix the leaking roof? The common recourse was to external funding. For many though of course not all African countries the external assistance has become the center of gravity for education and development initiatives. To many, it seems not only obvious but unexceptional that new initiatives and reform programs require external support, and therefore responsiveness funding agencies’ agendas and preferences. While historically foreign aid to has been a small part of total education spending in Africa, its influence often far exceeds its volume. That aid dependence helps to entrench international influence within African education systems. Our task in this session is to explore aid dependence, its consequences, and its implications for education policy.


International Influences II: Evolving International Education Roles; World Bank’s Education Policies and Initiatives (14 May)

Although education was not its primary mandate, the World Bank has paid increasing attention to education, including both funding and research. Indeed, the World Bank currently employs or commissions far more education researchers who specialize in Africa than any African university or research institution. World Bank policy statements and research findings and recommendations have become principal points of reference for all involved in education and development, African and non-African. It is important, therefore, to explore the World Bank’s orientation toward education and toward Africa and how they have changed over time. What are the policies? What are the issues? What are the critiques? Your reading should include both what the World Bank says and what critics say about what the World Bank says. (Note while we focus particular attention on the World Bank, reflecting its central role and substantial influence, other external agencies are prominent in education policy in Africa. Your country focus may require additional attention to another agency.)


supplementary readings


Outline and Bibliography for External Roles in Education Policy paper due

Education for All: The Global and the Local in Public Policy in Africa (21 May)

Making public policy is always contested. In Africa the participants in that process are not only the government and non-governmental organizations but also external institutions. Our concern is to explore the intersection of global and local (that is, national and sub-national) influences on education policy. For that, we will draw heavily on course participants’ research.


supplementary readings


Memorial Day (28 May)

**Education for All—Still a Distant Dream (4 June)**

We conclude the Quarter by addressing policy making and policy challenges in education. Who are the prominent and not-so-prominent participants in the policy process? What are their strategies and tactics? What have been the outcomes, both in terms of policy and in terms of modifying the policy process?


Rosa Maria Torres, “What Happened at the World Education Forum?”


supplementary readings


Review international reports on progress to date: EFA Global Monitoring Reports (noted above); Global Campaign for Education; Global Partnership for Education; World Bank; Save the Children; United Nations; UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Education; UNICEF.

›External Roles in Education Policy paper due