

Educational markets and social justice: An examination of education policy reforms in Tanzania and New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the tension between contemporary education policy and some aspects of social justice. It argues that the marketisation of education contributes significantly to some children's lower achievement in school; greater possibilities of dropping out; and lower eventual occupational status and income. In turn, this may not only put children at risk, but also contributes to greater social costs and increased risk to communities, nations and ironically the market itself. The paper underscores the point that there is a need to acknowledge where we are at now and make a sober search for alternative solutions.

Introduction

In the 1980s many countries, including Tanzania and New Zealand, restructured their economic and social activities according to the dictates of market forces (economic rationalism). With the argument that the market approach would sort out contemporary problems, developed countries carried out the reforms under the banner of international competitiveness, while in developing countries reforms were part of the Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

On the basis of an on-going research on education policy reforms in Tanzania and New Zealand, this paper examines the tension between contemporary education policy and some aspects of social justice. It argues that the market panacea espoused by the policy responses to the crises of the 1980s and '90s obscures the relationship between education and social justice. The marketisation of education significantly contributes to some children's lower achievement in school, greater possibilities of dropping out, and lower eventual occupational status and income. In turn, this may not only put children at risk, but could also contribute to greater social costs and enhanced risk to communities, nations, and ironically the market itself.

The paper underscores the point that there is a need to acknowledge where we are at now and make a sober search for alternative solutions. It uses examples from Tanzania and New Zealand's experiences with contemporary education policy reforms since the 1980s to support its central argument.

Conceptual considerations

In order to underscore the relationship between educational markets and social justice we have to examine the main principles of social justice as well as the ideological assumptions underpinning educational markets. The principles of social justice include fair processes, just outcomes and collective responsibility for special needs and provision in general. Ideological assumptions underpinning educational markets on the other hand, include individualism, privatisation and market rationalism.

Social justice in education

In the liberal welfare state, the pursuit of social justice has been one of the most acclaimed purposes for social policy reforms including educational policy reforms. This has been expressed in terms of principles of justice such as equity, equality, equal educational opportunity and affirmative action. These claims however, must be treated as problematic and worthy of investigation and deconstruction because they are constrained by the relations of power in socio-economic and political contexts, as well as ideological assumptions about education. Rizvi and Lingard (1992: 1) suggest that social justice does not have a single essential meaning, as 'words do not stand for some kind of essential object but have a more open texture; their meaning is to be found in their use in thought and action, in the description, interpretation, organisation and evaluation of behaviour.' By the same token, it is contended (Secada, 1989a; Apple 1993) that educational concepts are not only subject to severe ideological conflicts but are also constantly defined and re-defined to suit particular purposes. Apple (1989) notes, for example, that references to equity are sometimes made only as an appeal to popular sentiments in order to get adherents and justify the reforms. In such cases, appeal to equity is just a policy rhetoric, aimed at changing the conventional patterns of interpretations, thus advancing group interests without really addressing those arrangements which gave rise to equity concerns in the first place (Troyna and Williams, 1986).

To further develop the above arguments it is necessary to set out some operational specifications for social justice, in order to clarify our understanding of the concept. In this paper I contend that although there are various views of social justice, three major categories can be identified. These are *procedural justice* based on the processes or procedures; *distributive justice* that not only entail 'just' processes (procedures) but would also go further to include 'just' outcomes; and *the social-action based collective responsibility and recognition of specific needs*. A caveat should be made, however, that the distinction between these categories is not based on the conviction that they have nothing to do with each other but mainly because the criteria of justice in all areas are not necessarily always the same. That is, often some categories emphasise certain aspects at the expense of others.

In most cases procedural justice adheres to aggregative principles, while distributive justice leans towards distributive principles. Miller (1976: 19) explains that 'an aggregative principle is one which refers only to the total amount of goods enjoyed by a particular group, whereas a distributive principle refers to the share of that good which different members of the group have for themselves'.

Nozick's (1976) entitlement view of social justice falls under procedural justice. He argues that the freedom of individuals to compete must be protected so that 'it is the justice of competition, that is, the way competition is carried on, not its result that counts' (Rizvi & Lingard, 1992: 7). An example of a procedural justice policy statement would be that 'ability not privilege counts. Family background, race or sex will be neither an advantage or disadvantage in getting the desirable opportunity.' Such a statement, appealing to meritocracy and seemingly just, may not lead to social justice because it ignores unearned advantages or disadvantages accrued from family background, race or sex. In such cases, equal competition is used to rationalise unequal outcomes. It is

unfortunate that such a conception of justice appeals to those in power because it is less disruptive to the status quo since it reproduces existing class compositions.

Distributive social justice, on the other hand, is tightly connected with the concept of fairness and justice (Secada, 1989; Codd, 1993; Apple, 1993; Bierhoff; Cohen and Greenberg, 1986). Building on the relationship between equity and justice which was first stated by Aristotle, Secada (1989: 68-69) contends that equity is: 'our ability to acknowledge that, even though our actions might be in accord with a set of rules, their results may be unjust. Equity goes beyond following those rules' Thus equity entails more than a set of rules or procedures or processes; it encompasses outcomes.

Rawl's (1971) notion, whereby social justice is regarded as an issue of fairness, focusing upon equity in the distribution of resources falls under this category. Rawls (1971: 6) suggests two basic principles in maintaining social justice practices; that 'each person is to have the most extensive basic liberty compatible with similar liberty for others; and equal distribution of primary social goods ... unless unequal distribution is to the advantage of the less favoured.' This implies that some unequal treatments can be justified. However, caution is needed when considering this conception. The criteria for discrimination and the intended outcome should be clear and just in social terms. It is socially unjust for example, to push the children from lower social economic status into programmes that will curtail their social mobility later on in life.

In order to promote social justice in such cases as the above, the policies would have to promote affirmative action (Miller, 1976; Rizvi & Lingard, 1992) openly acknowledging the existence of the disadvantaged groups and taking a collective responsibility of the problems. Policies of this category work not only to end (negative) discrimination but also to overcome the results of long periods of discrimination.

It is important to note that education is a social phenomenon, which has to cater for the social needs of the society. Thus, equity in education 'should be construed as a check on the justice of specific actions that are carried out within the educational arena and the arrangement that result from those actions' (Secada, 1989: 69) as well as their implications for the well being of the society as a whole.

Neither of the categories provides sufficient criteria for social justice because the combination of fair procedures, fair outcomes and collective responsibility is needed in fostering social justice. Thus educational policies that contribute to social justice should promote fair processes or procedures, fair and just outcomes, as well as collective responsibility for improvement of education provided. It is within this understanding of social justice that the implications of educational markets created by contemporary educational policy reforms in Tanzania and New Zealand are examined.

The tension between marketization policies and social justice

Debate exists on whether there can exist educational markets given the nature of education, which as a product/ commodity is at best intangible. I argue in this paper, however, that although education cannot exist as a pure market, there are policy assumptions and practices that put it closer to the market realm, thus making it and its institutions quasi-markets. It is important therefore, to analyse the ideological assumptions underpinning these market oriented education policies and their implications for social justice.

With the advent of privatisation reforms the tradition of regarding education as a public good mediated through a publicly provided service (Grace, 1990) was challenged by those embracing the neo-liberal monetarist ideology (the New Right). Building on the argument that education was a commodity like any other and that many of the educational benefits are subject to individual capture rather than contributing to social or public good, neo-liberals suggest that marketisation of education was the key in sorting out the educational problems of the 1980s and 1990s. Following these neo-liberal economic assumptions education policies based on the principles of market

rationalism were introduced. It has been observed, in reference to New Zealand (Bines, 1995) and Tanzania (Samof & Sumra, 1994), that with the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s the principles of universalised provision, egalitarianism and collectivism have been replaced by market rationalism based on the principles of individualism, competition, consumer choice and cost efficiency.

The move to market rationalism, however, has an impact upon the whole philosophy of providing education and its contribution to social justice. By examining contemporary policies of educational funding, management and control, and access in Tanzania and New Zealand, the following discussion explicates the contention that marketisation of education creates tension between education and social justice.

Market oriented educational funding policies

User-pay and contracting-out educational funding policies are examples of funding policies that are based on principles of individualism and market accountability.

User pay policies in Tanzania include: re-introduction of school fees and direct cost in primary and secondary schools, re-establishment of private schools and providing lower cost alternative to secondary education, while those of New Zealand include voluntary school fees and fund raising activities carried out by schools and their communities. Contracting-out policies, on the other hand, include policies of school contracts, bulk-funding, and the sale of educational asserts in New Zealand; in Tanzania they are embedded in the investment incentives scheme.

It is arguable that the user-pay and contracting out policies not only restrict attempts to redistribute the available finite resources equitably, but also have the potential to hinder collective responsibility and fostering unequal outcomes.

With the market view that education is a commodity, whose amount can be purchased, depending on the individual preference and ability to pay, school fees were re-introduced in Tanzania. Tanzania's 'Education and Training Policy' (URT, 1995: 116) states that: 'School and tuition fees, in both government and non-government education and training institutions shall be based on the actual unit cost of providing education and training at each level.'

The re-introduction of school fees however, creates a situation of inequity in terms of access to education. School fees policy is a hindrance to educational participation for many peasants' and workers' children. The current (1997) secondary school fees (UHURU, 1997) of Tsh. 60,000:00 (USD \$100:00) is equivalent to the annual per capita income. What choice is there for one to spend the whole year's income on school fees for one child over other demands on that income? The re-introduction of school fees signifies that education is open for those children whose parents can afford direct payment. Ironically, through participation in economic activities and their share of the national debt (which impact on other aspects of life), everybody still contributes to education. It has been noted (Samof & Sumra, 1994: 19), for example, that beside the shift to marketisation of education the government still remains the largest source of funding. With education declared a private good purchased through fees those who obtain education have no basis of obligation to use it for the benefit of other members of the society, while the poor have no right to claim benefits from that education. Thereby creating a situation where some get privileges without responsibility, while others share responsibility without rights. It is arguable therefore that with the marketisation of education, the privilege of getting education in Tanzania is increasingly reserved for those who are able to pay directly.

Lower cost alternative paths to secondary education in Tanzania are another form of user-pays which has adverse effect on social justice. Part-time secondary school programmes in evening hours are provided by the Institute of adult education at a lower cost compared with private schools. While they use the same syllabus as formally registered secondary schools, and often recruit instructors from secondary school teachers, these programmes generally have poor facilities and lack

equipment and books (Samof & Sumra, 1994: 19). This signifies a compromise of education quality with lower standards for those who can afford to pay less. Like any commodity in the marketplace, the education one gets seem to depend on how much parents are willing or capable of paying; thus creating inequities basing on purchasing power.

A similar observation can be made regarding New Zealand. With the reforms, *voluntary school fees* and other contributions from communities are introduced to top up schooling expenditure. It has been noted that in New Zealand for example (Cassie, 1997) extra teachers (teacher aides) are paid by the schools from revenues obtained through fund raising activities. Rich communities thus manage to raise the quality and quantity of their children's education, while poor communities who cannot raise enough funds can only manage with less facilities and support which may lead to low quality education.

The impact of the voluntary school fees is such that, whereas students are not sent out of school because their parents cannot contribute, non-contribution reduces the financial base for resourcing schools leading to deterioration of educational facilities. Another issue emanating from this type of user- pay is that the parents of low socio-economic status increasingly have virtually no say on their children's education. It is only logical that a parent who asks to be excused from paying a required voluntary levy for example, will have less confidence to question the kind of education programme his/ her child is subjected to.

Another form of market-oriented funding policy is contracting out. In New Zealand, contracting out policies are in the form of bulk funding and the sale of educational assets. Based upon the assumption that there are few theoretical differences existing between public and private sector goods and services and how they can be supplied (Murphy, 1996: 28) policies of contracting out educational services were introduced. *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) clearly indicates that the New Zealand state should contract out educational services rather than providing them directly.

Through the school charter a contractual relationship is created between the central agents of the state and individual school Boards of Trustees which are presented as private agents. One of the responsibilities of school boards of trustees as expressed in the *Tomorrow's Schools* policy is to manage bulk grants provided by the government¹. Thus, bulk funding makes it necessary and easier for education services to be contracted out to the private sector, while the school acquires private corporation characteristics with the school board of trustees as a corporate board and the principal as a chief executive officer. This not only signifies a separation of funding from provision but also indicates a move to make the 'private' sector more responsive to public goals through a manipulation of incentives thought to govern market behaviour (Murphy, 1996: 32).

Bulk funding contributes to widening the gaps among levels of education opportunities and can easily discriminate against schools serving poor communities. With cuts on government expenditure, schools continue to get less and less from the government and communities have to top up schooling expenditure through voluntary school fees or fund raising activities. Thus School resources will increasingly depend on how much contribution the school is able to get from its immediate community. There is also a danger for some schools mislaying educational priorities due to the nature of their funding soliciting activities².

Educational asset sale is another form of contracting out which was introduced in New Zealand by the reforms. The process involves the removal of assets from their collective realm to private ownership with the promise that in turn they would provide services to educational institutions more reliably and efficiently (Lieberman, 1989). It is stated in *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988: 27-28) that:

Education Board and surplus departmental assets may be sold to former education board employees, departmental staff and others who may wish to own these assets as a base for providing services to institutions.

The neo-liberal view that the 'free market' is more efficient is reflected in the advocacy for relinquishing of educational assets to private operators who are motivated by profit making

opportunities. This monetary approach to the provision of educational services however, fails to take into consideration the status of the school in the community and the plight of members of the community who may not be able to purchase those services.

The relevance of the above observations to the contemporary situation cannot be over emphasised, especially when one considers the current reports of jobs lost or expected to be lost due to business closures, mergers, bankruptcy or sale, as well as the drop in prices of primary goods in the world market. Such reports signal uncertainties in family incomes and even the community structures, which may make communities and children who were not conventionally at risk, join the 'at risk' group due to changes in their social economic status.

It has been noted in New Zealand for example (Gordon, 1995: 10) that increased tension at home, unalleviated health problems, inadequate food, lack of money for clothing and the inability to meet costs, such as examination fees for school certificate, are only a few of the common problems cited by a number of New Zealand studies that have investigated the effects of increasing poverty, especially as a result of the 1990 benefit cuts.

Market oriented management and control policies

With the reforms, control of education has been characterised by tensions between policies of decentralisation of management and central control. Policies of School Site-Management in New Zealand and the decentralisation of Primary education in Tanzania are examples of decentralisation of management and central control policies.

Market place decentralisation and control processes are also advanced as means for redeeming the education system; thus making schools the focus of management. According to 'Tomorrow's schools' policy, the funding and management responsibilities are delegated to the schools through a school-site management system. The policy states that 'The basic unit of education administration will be the individual school or early childhood centre. Each institution will be under the overall policy control of a board of trustees' (Ministry of Education, 1988: 3). It was planned that 'Community education forums will be set up to act as a place of debate and a voice for those who wish to air their concerns - whether students, parents, teachers, managers or education administrators' (Ministry of Education, 1988: 2).

A diffuse collection of Boards of trustees and community forum³ throughout New Zealand is unlikely to constitute a power bloc that the Treasury would have to deal with in future struggles over education policy and resources. Thus rather than empowering the community, the privatisation reforms simply move the power of the state closer to the community while eroding the mechanisms through which communities would contradict state control.

School site management also leads to the tendency to consider schools in isolation from the context within which they are located. If schools are considered in isolation from the context within which they must work, it is fairly easy to transform the socio-political problems of inequality in school achievement into technical problems of school governance and management (Gordon, 1990).

It can be argued, therefore, that school site management not only signifies transfer of the legitimating crisis from the central government to the local communities (Codd, 1995; Gordon, 1992; Snook, 1995; Grace, 1990; Codd *et al.*, 1990) but also calls into question the society's collective responsibility and commitment to educating its children.

Based on the belief that education and business are sufficiently comparable, *Tomorrow's Schools* embraces the managerial techniques of modern business to build an accountability protocol for schools (Ministry of Education, 1998: 3-4). The most obvious managerial accountability technique incorporated in Tomorrow's Schools policy is the institutions Charter which became a

focal point upon which accountability is based; depending on how much the intended outcomes have been achieved during the reporting period.

This outlook is similar to production site management, where outcomes are readily quantifiable and measurable. Referring to the institutions charter, Dale (1993: 253) observes that formal requirements are more than ever confined to managerial and audit matters. Pre-occupation with measurable outcome in education however, may well lead to condoning major educational goals, which quite often are neither measurable nor quantifiable.

Building on the principle of competition school-site management rationalises inequality in educational opportunity. Whereas schools, as providers, have to compete for clients in order to sustain budget and staffing, standards are introduced and monitored centrally. The negative implications of such control are that it encourages segmentation and differentiation within the school system. To keep an upper position in the assessment league table some schools may resort to inflexible structures and schedules based more on history and inertia than student or family needs⁴. It is arguable that students who exhibit some kind of non-conformity to the norms of the school may be pushed into special needs programmes not necessarily because the children would benefit from the programmes but because their removal from regular programmes, would ensure target attainment. The categorisation of students for special needs streams may also become a process through which students are consigned and confined into those streams with no possibility of ever rejoining the mainstream without 'jeopardising' achievement targets for the school. The problem of students in these programmes not achieving up to their potential as a result of such categorisation, need not arise, not only because under the market regime inequity is not an issue for consideration but also because they are never taken into account when assessing school success.

With similar sentiments about the situation in the US, Hixson and Tinzmann (1990: 12) observe that, even though schools enrol far more racial, linguistic and cultural minorities as well as students who are poor, or who have handicapping conditions, more than ever before, the education of too many of these students is characterised by low expectations, and differential treatment. They state that 'the doors to schools have been opened, but hanging above those doors are signs that say: "Enter at your own risk". "You may not belong here".'

Market-oriented educational management policies also contribute to inequality of access to adequately resourced schools. With decentralisation of primary education in Tanzania, for example, there have grown greater disparities in the development of education in different communities depending on the economic revenue base, enrolments, type of district (whether it is rural or urban), and the social economic status of the members of the community.

A recent research study conducted in Dodoma Rural District and Morogoro Municipal Council in Tanzania (Andrea 1996) indicate that although primary education in both districts is still poor and inefficient, by comparison the situation is worse in Dodoma Rural District than in Morogoro municipality. Andrea (1996: 3) argues that this disparity reflects the poor incomes of the residents of Dodoma Rural District and their inability to contribute directly to schools.

In another research study conducted in several regions and districts in Tanzania, it was noted (Galabawa 1992) that even within the same regions and districts there are polarisation and inequity among schools. Galabawa (1992: 15) observes that the polarisation between schools in traditionally wealthy urban centres and those in their rural counterparts in the same region is alarming.

Given the meagre resource at the disposal of districts, some district councils give high priority to other sectors or allocate nothing to primary education. Galabawa (1992) notes that while some councils in Lindi Region gave low priority to education; focusing mainly on water, roads and health, the Bukoba Town Council and Mwanza Municipality did not allocate anything to education in 1991/92. Referring to the research conducted by Semboja and Therkildsen (1989), Galabawa (1992) observes that local authorities have limited possibilities of generating their own resources because of inelastic sources of revenue as well as a lack of access to loans due to little credit worthiness. It is

arguable therefore that decentralisation may contribute to the deterioration of education provision in some communities, particularly those with insufficient resources.

A similar argument may be extended to the situation in New Zealand, regarding school-site management policies. Since school funding depend mostly on pupils they attract; those schools with stagnant or falling rolls are caught in a vicious circle. With less funding they have little room for improvement hence they tend to appear at the bottom end of the league table of the examination results; so, they do not attract more students and consequently they get lesser funding. Thus the students who cannot transfer to 'better' schools are at risk of not achieving in the school system. By extension, those students who will complete the education cycle in the poor communities will do so with the sense of failure, and this may contribute in discouraging other children in their communities from enrolling and attending school. Moreover, the school system would be helping to persuade children from disadvantaged communities that they are academic failures, uneducable and untrainable, socialising them into accepting their current disadvantaged position for themselves and for their future generation.

Access and market base choice

Another important characteristic of market rationalism is the notion of choice, which maintains that 'free choice' in a market place guarantees satisfaction to both parties to a transaction - the consumer and the provider. It also implies the possibility of the consumer looking elsewhere if satisfaction is not met. That is, dissatisfaction is not really worked out by negotiation and compromise; when one party is dissatisfied with the outcomes of the transaction, further transactions do not occur. Reynold and Sokro (1996: 6) contend that 'dissatisfaction with the market is expressed primarily as "exit" and not "voice"' A similar situation may occur in the educational setting where 'exit' is expressed as 'choice.' Those students who drop out of the school system may be seen to have exercised their choice prerogative, and the school system from which these children drop-out would be under no obligation to try and retain them (In most cases they may have been the client who were disrupting the smooth running of their business). The effect of such a view is that it obscures the need to focus attention on structural and organisational impediments in the current model of schooling.

De-zoning and school-based management can serve as an example of market-oriented policies promoting the notion of choice as exit in New Zealand. School-based management, together with de-zoning, were meant to encourage parents to exercise their consumer power in the new education market place through choosing schools for their children. *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988: 37) policy provides for parents to withdraw their children from existing institutions and setting up separate ones or provide home schooling if the particular educational needs of their children cannot be met locally.

The impression one gets is that all parents have the ability in terms of know-how and resources and can take advantage of such provision. In reality, however, there are several impediments to parental choice. Gordon (1995) advocates that school choice should be conceptualised within the other choices (or non-choices) that families have to make such as geographical location, family income, employment, educational background, ethnicity, and perceived attitude and aspiration of other children attending the same school; among many others, affect school choice.

Important to our discussion is that, as a result of school choice, there has developed a hierarchy of schools with the most popular schools located in the wealthy areas, and the least popular schools in the least wealthy ones. It has been noted (Gordon, 1995) that schools in the wealthiest areas tend to become full, whilst those in the poorest areas suffer from falling rolls.

Ironically, it is these under-funded schools in poor communities who also have to deal with various social welfare related problems. Gordon (1995: 1) notes that:

There are indications that the kind of 'social welfare problems' which schools are having to deal with are both growing in number and increasingly concentrated into certain schools in particular those in poor urban areas which are also suffering from stagnant and falling rolls .

It may be argued that since poor schools are concentrated in poor communities it would be easier for the state to target them for support and improvement. However there is little evidence to support such an argument. Studies done elsewhere (such US and Canada) indicate that as a consequence of demographic and economic stratification of society there is a decline in the public's interest and willingness to support schools for 'other people's' children (Hixson and Tinzmann, 1990: 14). Levin & Riffel (1994: 15) also argue that since poverty is seen as a transient status it is difficult to organise strong lobbies focused on it. They contend that:

It is hard to envisage a movement based on pride in being poor. Indeed, poverty is still frequently viewed as a condition to be ashamed of, and which is one's own fault. Not only does this view limit political work around the issue, it also limits the respect or sympathy with which lobbying efforts will be met. The poor also tend to lack the resources to organise.

Inequity in education therefore, facilitates inequalities in the society by maintaining the status quo; which means reproducing existing social differentiation and structure.

It is also important to note that the market based 'School choice' does not create avenues whereby parent would contribute positively towards the improvement of their local schools and the schooling system in general. Instead it thwarts their voices by creating an escape valve regardless of whether they are able to use it or not. This may not only alienate parents and their children from the school system but also would inculcate the 'quitting culture'⁵ among the youngsters which may contribute into their desperate and sometimes self-damaging actions when faced with challenging situations.

Educational marketization and the market

The above arguments indicate that market oriented education policies are creating environments which are increasingly producing 'at risk children'⁶, disparities among communities, as well as alienating the parents and their children from the school system.

The cost of denied opportunity to the youngsters has a propensity to spread beyond the children, their families or communities to the society and even the market itself. Students who are suspended, dropping out of school or getting low quality education in under-resourced schools, as well as those who cannot face-up to the challenges of life are at risk of becoming social derelicts. The New Zealand Youth Law Office⁷ has noted, for example, that 'suspensions are likely to cause young people to get into trouble, fall behind in school work and develop negative attitudes to school, with suspended students experiencing anger, depression and feeling "stink and unwanted"' (Education Review, 1997: 1).

Studies on urban youth and youngsters in Eastern Africa indicate similar tendencies, if only at a higher and more elevated levels. Ishumi (1984) reports that most of the primary school leavers⁸ or drop-outs (71.4%) in the cities were found idling, with occasional casual or temporary engagements, petty-vending, solicitation and prostitution, pocket picking ' and criminal engagements ranging from smaller dimensions of house breaking and shop-lifting to higher-scale acts of ambushing, and highway car and bus jacking' (Ishumi, 1984: 25). Writing ten years later, Kilimwiko (1994) describes the plight of the children of the poor in Tanzania, by observing that many impoverished school drop-outs are used as child labour or have just taken to the streets of cities and towns where they join the ranks of the unemployed, scrounging on the streets and often forced to turn to prostitution, pick pocketing and other crimes.

Under such conditions, they not only contribute to social disharmony but also it is difficult for the society to harness the productive potential of these youngsters. It might be further argued that

the youngsters without requisite skills have little hope for decent incomes to make them worthwhile consumers, which in turn limits the development and expansion of the market.

The above observations indicate that growing social disparity breeds tensions that in turn interfere with the harmony and stability necessary for the smooth functioning of the market. The relevance of such observation to our contemporary societies cannot be over emphasised. From the popular media (television, newspapers, etc.) both in Tanzania and in New Zealand, it is apparent that there is a growing concern about the increase in juvenile crime, teenage suicide and truancy. Further, government officials and politicians are reported increasingly voicing concern about the changing morality, increasing crime rate and social insecurity⁹.

It is important, therefore, to be clear of the purpose and type of education, which is not only appropriate today but also for the future of our societies. That is the education that would develop humane values and practices, improve academic outcomes, as well as enhance skills and economic productivity.

Concluding remarks and suggestions

The foregoing analyses suggest the need for a different logic in considering alternative policy solutions to contemporary educational problems. While it is not the intention of this paper to offer prescriptions of alternatives to be followed, some suggestions of avenues that can be explored in search of alternatives are proffered. Admittedly, the polarisation between those advocating for the pre-reform era and those promoting market reforms may make our search for alternative solutions more difficult.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, education should aim at contributing positively to social justice. To start with, the complexity of access to education needs to be taken into consideration. In order to contribute to social justice, access to education has to go beyond enrolment and attendance to include the type of instructions, who is accountable to whom and for what, as well as the status of schooling in the society.

Further, policy alternatives have to aim at promoting professional accountability and collegiality (Darling-Hammond, 1991) which allows practitioners to make decisions about how to meet the educational needs of individual students. That is, educational policies have to refrain from making the educational workforce accountable only for following standard procedures because this may not only lead to pushing low-scoring students out of the school-count and eventually out of school but also diluting education to the minimum requirements of market accountability.

Strategies such as explicit goals for closing the achievement gap, increasing quality instructional time, particularly in individualised or small group settings and providing students opportunities to learn from each other (through co-operative learning strategies) would help to increase the expectations of both the students and their teachers. This would facilitate significant, accelerated academic gains in students typically classified as 'at-risk.'

In order to promote social justice, schools need to be understood as more than commodity production sites whereby outcomes are readily quantifiable and measurable. Alternative policy responses need to ensure that they do not make schools strive to provide narrow-based education, geared principally to passing examinations, at the expense of striving to produce educated and socially well-developed human beings.¹⁰ Appropriate education needs to develop habits of inquiry and critique among youngsters and not to create mute compliant workers. Alternative education policies also need to promote collaboration and collective responsibility within the education workforce and among educational institutions and their communities. Avenues through which parents and other members can contribute positively to the development of schools have to be created instead of relying on 'exit' as an expression of dissatisfaction.

It is important that the search for alternative educational policy responses to contemporary educational problems has to consider all aspects of schooling, including: funding and organisational strategies, curriculum, instruction, assessment, staff development, as well as factors outside school that influence students' 'readiness to learn.' Thus, ensuring quality, and maintaining equity and justice in access to education should be responsibilities of the state for which avenues for it to be held accountable and answerable need to be explored and developed.

The challenge is to establish practices that stimulate all students to learn, while ensuring that the diverse needs of students at greatest risk are met in a non-stigmatising manner. My argument is that market-oriented educational policies that contribute to social disparity, desperation and despair to some of our society's youngsters are neither conducive for the development of societies nor for the market. I contend that there is a need to underscore the point that neither the nostalgic 'good old days' nor the 'brave new world' of the market panacea will lead us to appropriate alternatives. While we make sober searches for alternative solutions, we need to acknowledge the impact that the policy reforms that started in the 1980s have had on the provision of education in our societies.

Notes

1. It is worth noting however that up to this moment only a few schools in New Zealand are fully bulk funded. Due to resistance from the teacher (through their unions) in most schools, only operational budgets are bulk funded.
2. It has been reported recently that some school principals in New Zealand were contemplating on selling school names to potential benefactors. This creates a possibility for schools to compromise some educational principles to accommodate the benefactors' images.
3. Community Education Forum was later abolished taking away one mechanism through which the public's views could be voiced
4. An in-depth research study on various techniques employed by schools in their struggle to keep or get an upper position in the assessment league table would be helpful.
5. In this paper a 'quitting culture' means the attitude of running away from the challenges of life rather than dealing with them and trying to sort them out.
6. 'At risk children' and 'students at risk' are used interchangeably, referring to school aged children who are denied equal access to educational opportunities, those who have tendencies to leave school at the first opportunity and those whose educational achievement is hindered by social and environmental factors.
7. The report is based on case studies.
8. Primary school leaver refers to Primary school graduates.
9. The East African News of September, 1997, reported the Deputy Minister for Labour and Youth Development, in Tanzania lamenting the moral decay among the youth and appealing for public support to remedy the situation. The former President, Julius Nyerere was also quoted saying that the rate of crimes, which include raping and child molestation cases, was deplorable.
10. In his recent address to schools, the President of Tanzania cautioned that some schools were preparing students just for passing examinations and urged all schools to aim at producing educated and socially well developed human beings, based on the all-round development of the academic, artistic, physical, social, psychological and personality profile of the students.

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