A Glance at the Ethiopian Higher Education from the Developmental State Perspective

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Abstract: Modern higher education in Ethiopia has a short history of a little over six decades. Over the past two decades there have been tremendous reforms that aimed at expanding and modernizing the higher education subsector so that it would make meaningful contributions for the country's development. However, despite the rapid expansion of the sector, its process and roles have not become a research agenda to assess whether Ethiopia is following the 'right path' of the developmental state model in its various economic and social policies. Therefore, this study attempts to shed light on the nature of the Ethiopian higher education taking the perspective of the developmental state paradigm. Based on the method of document analysis, the findings of the study indicate that the Ethiopian higher education shows strong manifestations of the characteristics which were evident in those developmental states in early stage. Strong state control, central admission process, focus on certain priority areas, massive expansion, emphasis on technology transfer and using higher education to serve non-economic national agendas are typically observable in the Ethiopian higher education system. The study has also identified some inconsistencies and shortcomings. For instance, the Ethiopian higher education falls short in terms of institutional diversity, adequacy of research on technology transfer, and the role of the private sector. Finally, some implications are highlighted to pinpoint the areas worthy of more detailed policy research.

Keywords: developmental state, higher education, Ethiopia

Background of the study

Since the time of its ancient civilization, Ethiopia has had its own indigenous formal education. This two millennia old traditional education is strongly linked to the Ethiopian Orthodox church and had remained as the predominant form of producing the elites of the country for a long time. Modern and secular higher education was introduced in 1950 with the establishment of the then University College of Addis Ababa with about 1000 students and less than fifty teachers, most of whom were foreigners (Wondimu, 2003). In the following two decades a number of specialized technical colleges were also established to offer professional trainings in the fields of agriculture, engineering, public health and teacher education (World Bank, 2003). Reorganizing most of these junior colleges under it, the university college was upgraded and renamed as Hailesillasie I University in 1960. In 1974, when the imperial government collapsed, the university was renamed Addis Ababa

University (Wondimu, 2003). Addis Ababa University is not only a pioneer and the largest higher education institution (HEI) to date, but it also remains a central player in the social and political dynamics of the country.

During the period 1974 to 1991 the development in the Ethiopian higher education was very slow. For instance the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education that was about 0.2% by the year 1970 increased only to 0.7% after twenty five years in 1995 (World Bank, 2003; Weldemariam, 2008). Addis Ababa University had remained the only university until the opening of Alemaya (now Haramaya University) in 1985, and no graduate program had been launched until mid 1979 (Araia, 2004). This can be attributed partly to the widespread civil war and political unrest during that period and partly to lack of encouragement to the development of the higher education subsector in developing countries by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. However, it should be noted, that during this period, besides the establishment of several junior institutions, the 'quota system' was introduced to enhance access for women and students from rural areas and other disadvantaged regions (Semela, 2007).

The 1991 change of government opened a new chapter in the history of the country, and consequently in the development of its higher education. By that time, education in general and higher education in particular was lagging far behind even by the standards of Sub-Saharan Africa. Cognizant of this, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) identified education as one area of priority and in 1994 set up a comprehensive education and training policy (ETP). The policy aimed at improving the overall state of education at all levels and ensuring that education makes the required contribution in the country's development. The policy essentially opened the door to a period of all-inclusive, far-reaching reforms and massive expansion.

In the wake of the issuance of the policy, a number of radical reforms have been introduced in the higher education subsector. Since 1998 four successive five-year Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP I -IV) have been formulated and implemented; in 2003 the Higher Education Proclamation (HEP) was enacted and later revised in 2009; and a number of other reforms were introduced addressing different aspects of higher education. In effect, the subsector was opened up for private investment, tuition fees in a form of student cost sharing have been introduced, HEIs have been granted substantial autonomy, diverse new fields of study have been launched, block grant method of budgeting has been introduced, government agencies for quality assurance and strategic direction have been established, and other changes have been introduced.

During the first few years of the reform program, the entire focus was on primary education and expansion and reforms in higher education began in the late 1990s. The Ministry of Education (MoE) launched five new universities by the turn of the century – by upgrading junior level institutions – marking the beginning of this aggressive expansion program. Ethiopia set a big plan to have 33 full-fledged universities by the year 2014/15 compared to

only two by the end of the 1990s. Total enrollment has increased from 42,132 in 1996/97 to 192,165 in 2004/05 (MoE, 2005) quadrupling in less than a decade. The annual enrollment growth rate of 50.86 % was possibly the highest in the world during this period (Waweru & Abate, 2011). In line with a target of 467,445 by 2014/15, it had actually reached 319,217 in 2010/11 (MoE, 2010a).

While the investment by the government takes the lion's share which made Ethiopia, as of 2010, one of the top eleven higher education spending nations in the world and the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa (Molla, 2012), the expansion was not circumscribed only to the public institutions. Taking advantage of a favorable policy environment, private investment in higher education has witnessed a sharp rise in the sector. In about a decade after the sector was liberalized, the number of accredited private HEIs, with undergraduate and above programs, grew from zero to 44 in 2009/2010 academic year, enrolling about 18% of the total student body (MoE, 2011).

However, in spite of this glamorous success in terms of reform and expansion, the Ethiopian higher education has been struggling with a number of challenges. These include, among others, the issue of equity, quality, autonomy, accountability, brain drain, academic freedom, lack of adequate resources and facilities, teachers' working condition, salary and incentives, etc. (Semela, 2007; Woldegiyorgis, 2013). The government has indeed identified some of these challenges and is trying to implement solutions; the problems seem to persist, though.

Research question

Having officially claimed to be a developmental state, government controls and leads with a firm hand in Ethiopia. Since the current ruling party came to power in 1991, the country has undergone a number of reforms in different sectors including education. Higher education has also seen its share of changes both in policy and practice. While there is a lot of debate on whether Ethiopia is following the 'right path' of the developmental state model in its economic, agricultural, trade and industry policies, there exists no study addressing the question in the education sector – particularly the higher education subsector.

In fact, this is also, more or less, the picture at the international level. The astounding economic success of Southeast Asian countries in the 1970s and 1980s has attracted considerable interest in academic work trying to explain how those countries achieved such a swift progress. Yet, much of the research is concerned with different aspects of economic policy making and implementation. In the field of education, most of the academic work is overwhelmingly focused on lower level education and, to some extent, on vocational trainings. Researches attempted to explain and theorize how education contributed to economic development by examining the triangular relationships between education, economy and the state. Higher education largely appears to have been left out of such inquiry within the notion of the developmental state. Consequently, there is poor literature that elaborates the nature and role of higher education in the developmental state paradigm,

particularly in the context of those early developmental states, the background of which is more or less similar to that of current day Ethiopia.

This paper, therefore, by using major characteristics of higher education in early-stage developmental states (Woldegiyorgis, 2015) as analytical framework, examines how the concept of developmental state is represented in the Ethiopian higher education. Put differently, the research question is:

- How does the Ethiopian higher education system correspond to the tenets of the system in those developmental states?

Rationale

Determining how much the nature of the Ethiopian higher education is consistent with that of those developmental states often deemed to be examples of success, helps to identify its strengths and shortcomings towards learning from the experiences of other countries. Furthermore, with the appropriate contextualization to the current situation of Ethiopia, the findings of this study can provide implications to determine the alternative courses of action necessary to make sure that the country's higher education is in the right track towards its development agendas.

Research design and methodology

Research design

Following Babbie's (2006) categorization of social research on the basis of purpose as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, this qualitative research employed an exploratory research design, with certain characteristics of descriptive research. In social science an exploratory research design is most suited to a research problem/topic where there are few or no earlier studies to refer to. In such a case the exploratory research focuses on gaining insights into and creating familiarity to a subject for later investigation (Cuthill, 2002; Labaree, 2014). The goal of exploratory research, therefore, is not to produce a conclusive result that can be used for decision making, but rather to create more understanding of an issue for further research. An exploratory research design also provides maximum flexibility since it can be used to address questions of all types (what, why, how) and can use various methods of data generation (Labaree, 2014).

The subject of higher education in the context of the developmental state has been little researched. Particularly in the case of Ethiopia no prior research is available on the issue. Hence, this research is intended to provide preliminary understanding on the subject, instigating specific questions in this line of inquiry. Therefore, the exploratory research design is most suited to the purpose sought – exploring the nature of the Ethiopian higher education from the developmental state perspective.

Sources of data

Data for this research was primarily obtained from official government documents and analyzed using the content analysis method (Bowen, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Mogalakwe, 2006). More specifically, a theory driven deductive qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was used where previously formulated aspects of analysis, originating from the theoretical concept of developmental state and built up based on literature review, were used in connection with the content of the selected documents. Reliability and convenience explain the choice of the source of data. On the one hand, review of [official] documents has the edge of providing objective and verifiable information on a subject (Berelson, 1952 cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006). On the other hand, considering the physical and communication technology gap between where the researcher was located (Finland) and where primary data was available (Ethiopia), relying on existing data was the obvious option.

Having in mind the purpose of obtaining the most reliable and sufficient system level information, both in policy and practical spheres, the following documents were used as the main sources of data.

a) Education and Training Policy, henceforth ETP, (TGE, 1994). This, was issued by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia in 1994, and is still in action. With sections emphasizing objectives, overall strategies, and areas of priority and special attention, this document provides the broadest direction for all levels of education and various forms of training. However, it is discernible that higher education is addressed here as part of the overall direction defined by the policy and did not receive any special attention, nor was it given a priority.

b) Higher Education Proclamation, henceforth HEP, (FDRE, 2009). This was issued by the House of Peoples' Representatives of Ethiopia, the current higher education proclamation number 650/2009 is a revision of its predecessor proclamation 351/2003 (of the same title). The proclamation, with multitude of sections addresses a number of major aspects of higher education at both system and institutional level.

c) Education Sector Development Program, henceforth ESDP, I to IV (1997 to 2015). Following the development of the education and training policy, the Ministry of Education organized a series of consultation to design implementation plan for the policy. This consultation, which involved stakeholders at regional and federal levels as well as donor agencies and others (Martin, Oksanen, & Takala, 2000), resulted in the development of a series of five year programs the first of which was launched in the 1997/98 to last to the year 2001/2002. Later it was decided to align the programs with the five year office-term of the government making the second phase cover between years 2000/2001 and 2004/2005 – therefore the overlap between the last two years of the first phase were integrated into the first two years of the second phase (MoE, 2001). The ESDP derives its goals and strategies from the policy and identifies specific time-bound objectives for each level of education along with the resource and organizational requirements.

The education and training policy gives a general direction, the proclamation provides the legal framework within which the policy goals are to be achieved, and the ESDP presents the practical aspect in the development of education in the country. Hence, a combination of these three kinds of documents gives more or less a complete picture of how higher education is placed in Ethiopia. To supplement this, the following documents were also consulted in the research:

- Directive for placement of regular undergraduate students to public higher education institutions (Amharic) (MoE, 2010b)
- Council of Ministers regulation on cost sharing in higher education (FDRE, 2003b)
- National employment policy and strategy (MOLSA, 2009)

Additional data were also obtained from different secondary sources as well as review of literature such as annual education statistical abstracts; annual reports on various issues by recognized institutions; budgetary and financial reports; surveys, studies and academic researches; and other sources including websites, news, opinion articles, videos, interviews, speeches, etc.

Data analysis

The analytical framework used in this study was developed based on review of relevant literature. It has identified seven major characteristics of higher education typical to the developmental state of the 1970s and 80s in the East Asian region. A document review guideline, which follows the components of the analytical framework, was used to dictate the review of the key documents identified in the previous section. The guideline includes a total of 27 specific questions under the seven categories. Each document was reviewed and relevant information was obtained and categorized in accordance with the guideline and in a manner that addresses each specific question under each category. Similarly, the analysis and interpretation were made following the framework. Finally, the developmental nature of the Ethiopian higher education is discussed in light of what higher education looked like in the time and region of what is often considered the pinnacle of the developmental state model.

Methodological limitations

First, the incorporation of primary data would have enriched the information available. Accordingly, attempt was made to get interview with officials of concerned institutions and experts involved at policy making level. However, the attempt was met with challenge when targeted potential interviewees refrained from responding to e-mail requests for an interview schedule, though some of them had initially expressed their willingness.

Second, education in Ethiopia, like any other policy area, is highly politicized and a clear difference on opinions is reflected along the lines of political differences. While there is a relatively fair degree of agreement on certain issues such as access, the differences are very

vivid on issues like quality, governance and administration, institutions and teachers' autonomy, professionalization of the teaching job, academic freedom, etc. This can be seen in different reports and commentaries. Even scholars often appear to stand on diametrically opposite sides. Some (e.g. Ashcroft, 2004, 2010a, 2010b; Teshome & Kebede, 2009; Yizengaw, 2003, 2005) write about the success and triumph of higher education while others (e.g. Bishaw, 2002; Kahsay, 2012; Negash, 2006; Telila, 2010) write about the crisis and collapse of the same. This has made it difficult to determine the reliability of available literature to be considered in the study.

Third, the attempt made to read through publications of the ruling party, EPRDF, looking for background information and justifications for the policy directions followed was unfruitful since these documents predominantly justify policy choices by appealing to the polarized political relations with the opposition, than based on scientific reasoning rooted in the practical needs of the society. The documents seem to be more dedicated to glorifying and protecting the ideology of revolutionary democracy and the political power arrangement of ethnic federalism by categorically condemning the alternative views on social policies as threats.

Finally, in several documents, including the education and training policy and the ESDP, higher education is presented blended with other levels of education. There is no separate long term strategy specifically for higher education. Therefore, extracting the data/information was subject to contextual interpretations.

Towards analytical framework

Since the human capital theory emerged in the mainstream economics, there have been a number of researches substantiating the thesis that education and training increase the stock of human capital of a given society, which in turn interprets itself into economic growth by increasing efficiency and productivity (Amsden, 1989; Ashton, Green, James, & Sung, 1999; Benhabib & Spiegel, 1994; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008; Wolff & Gittleman, 1993).

In a more recent and practical experience of the developmental states in the Southeast Asian region, the role of education, and higher education in particular, in accelerated economic development has been observed as central. Advocates of the developmental state argue that rapid economic growth in the region is, at least partly, attributable to the vast expansion of education and training through centrally coordinated planning and resource management towards building stock of human capital (Green, 1999; IMF, 1991; Morris, 1996; Morishima, 1997).

As a result of this relationship between economy and education systems, there has been a discernible relationship between the level of economic growth and the emphasis on educational expansion. As countries transformed from agrarian to advanced industrial economies, they also moved from relying more on primary education to advanced higher education. Cummings (1997 in Abe, 2006) commented that at the early stage of economic

growth the state investment in tertiary education was negligible, which later came to take a sizable proportion of total educational budget. However, this did not happen in all developmental countries in the same way while its pattern was more visible in countries such as Singapore.

At the beginning, during the low-cost and labor-intensive manufacturing stage of economic growth, basic literacy and numeracy amongst the workers was vital. The economy required no sophisticated knowledge, but rather needed low-wage labor. Therefore, the primary focus of the education system was to provide universal, basic general and technical education (Tan, 2007) to the workforce.

In the meantime, in preparation to the next stage of economic development – the capital intensive stage – investment in infrastructure development for secondary schools, vocational education schools and training centers was underway. Many developmental countries adopted a flexible approach for recognizing informal trainings for up skilling and trainings for those who did not come through the channel of the formal education (e.g. workers who dropped out of primary schools but have been working for several years would get the chance to be trained in vocational schools as long as they meet some basic requirements such as basic English and Math). Lastly, the knowledge-intensive stage of economic growth was characterized by its aims to move up the global value chain to catch-up with advanced economies. Thus education and training policies focused on skills upgrading required for effective participation in an advanced industrial society, the enhancement of intermediate level technical skills and expansion of higher education focusing on science, technology and engineering (Sung & Raddon, 2013).

Once higher education had come to center stage in development strategies, it was planned and managed in a manner that would fit the overall economic development plan – hence higher education in developmental states showed a peculiar pattern of behavior. Indeed, according to Castells (1993), some of the features and roles of higher education in developmental states are similar to that of the traditional universities in Europe and elsewhere, but with a different level of emphasis or unique combination of goals and functions. In the face of the paucity of solid model to describe higher education in developmental states, Woldegiyorgis (2015[1]) has identified the following features as a general framework of understanding. This framework was developed using extensive literature review from the experiences of East Asian countries back in the 1970s and 1980s. These countries not only had a similar context to current day Ethiopia but also are often cited as model of success in the discourse of the Ethiopian developmental state.

    a) Strong state control system

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1 This analytical framework is an excerpt from a previous work of the author. For the full account see: Woldegiyorgis, A. A. (2015). Higher education in early-stage developmental states: lessons for beginners. Working Papers in Higher Education Studies, 1(1), 1-22.

The interventionist developmental state intervenes in and closely controls its higher education system to make sure that the higher education development and strategy are well coordinated with the other aspects of its social and economic policies. Such a centralized system is commonly referred to as the state control model. Though this model has been criticized for its shortcomings such as leaving minimum level of autonomy for the higher education institutions and in effect hindering innovation, a number of countries have proved successful in promoting rapid economic growth if well aligned with overall developmental goals and properly coordinated with other policies and sectors.

b) Centralized admission procedures

The desire to ensure that the higher education system supplies the required amount and mix of graduates to the labor market has made developmental states have a control over the details of higher education institutions. Admission is one such area where government involvement was crucial, even in private academic institutions. Central government agencies, such as ministries of education, were directly involved in determining the admission process to higher education with three purposes in mind: ensuring quality of higher education, making up for social injustices, and determining how many people join each discipline in response to the needs of economy. Many developmental states used centrally administered strict higher education admission test and/or national system of assessment that sought the most competitive ways to identify the best of every cohort that would join higher education and a complimentary system of assigning students to different institutions and/or fields, often more according to the national plan than their preferences.

c) Major emphasis on technology transfer/learning from others

Science and technology play a critical role as sources of economic productivity and competitiveness in the contemporary global economy. Hence, countries try all means possible to keep up with the changes in technology and global markets. Traditionally, the unindustrialized countries were dependent on the industrialized ones, largely being consumers rather than producers of science and technology. However, the successful developmental states realized that they cannot, in the long run, rely on others to produce all of the knowledge and skills needed for their emerging technologically-based industries. At the early stages they opted for un-systematized and unreliable methods where technological inputs were purchased from abroad or were sometimes simply copied without regard to the legal niceties. Later on they started developing their own scientific system and academic institutions as well as building a research base in order to effectively analyze, interpret, and use advanced research and technology from abroad. In those countries higher education institutions were acknowledged for contributing significantly in not only assisting the technology transfer and adaptation but in the development of indigenous technology as well.

d) Diversified institutions

Higher education systems of developmental states are diversified on the basis of what specific function they perform and what needs they have to satisfy. A majority of institutions are devoted to training bureaucrats and technocrats and preparing the supply of professionals

for the dynamic needs of the economy, while few high quality institutions are the breeding ground for the elites of the political leadership and policy makers. Similarly, in terms of their engagement, many of the institutions are primarily concerned with training (and teaching) while few selective institutions with the brightest staff and students are set for scientific leadership through research. It is also discernible that there are distinctions between comprehensive and specialized institutions, the later ultimately dedicated to a certain small area of specialization but with greater intensity.

e) Focus on science and technology as priority areas

Considering the availability of limited resources, countries need to identify and pursue certain areas of high priority consistent with their socioeconomic needs and integral to their development plans. In doing so, they determine their comparative advantage, choose between different fields and disciplines and foster links between research and development (R&D). Though it took effect in different ways, the emphasis on science and technology was a common phenomenon. Some of the techniques applied in different systems included controlling and manipulating the admission process, establishing government agency in charge of the promotion of science and technology (at commission or ministerial level) to enact various laws, opening many more science and technology universities, altering student choices at lower level, establishing high class science and technology institutes, providing better incentive for those who prefer to join those fields (both at undergraduate and graduate levels), providing more generous grants to researches in the priority fields, etc.

f) Large scale expansion

While the second half of the twentieth century saw significant expansion of higher education in many developing countries, particularly in developmental states the rate of expansion was exceptional and purposefully directed (China's case of building 500 universities in five years time in the 1980s epitomizes this narrative). Recognizing the valued contribution of higher education in producing the desired high level human power, governments were willing to make substantial investment in the sector. In the 1970s and 1980s, the share of expenditure in higher education progressively increased in percentage of both GNP and total education budget of several countries.

g) Non-economic functions/goals

Higher education institutions have diverse purposes that cover a wide range of social, economic and political aspects of a society's life. Over different historical epochs in different societies, higher education institutions have played varying roles relevant to the respective circumstances. For developmental states, where economic growth was an agenda of top priority, higher education was not maintained only for its economic benefits. In fact, nation building was an important issue in Southeast Asian developmental countries such as South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia. Hence, (higher) education, used for fostering a strong sense of social cohesion and political identity, was seen as a vital component of the process which targeted at overall socio economic and political development of those countries.

Discussion and analysis of findings

[Higher] education as a tool in development

To understand the developmentalist nature of a given education system or how education is integrated in the overall developmental approach of a country, the first thing to look into would be how education is connected to development and the significance attached to it in the overall development strategies. In the reviewed official documents, there is sufficient evidence substantiating the critical role of education in the development endeavors of Ethiopia. The importance attached to education in the documents is, in the words of Teshome (2008, p. 52), 'almost biblical'.

The ETP gives a definition of education that is strongly rooted in the purpose and role it plays in the human life in general:

> Education is a process by which man transmits his experiences, new findings, and values accumulated over the years, in his struggle for survival and development, through generations. Education enables individuals and society to make all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, ability, skills and attitudes (TGE, 1994, p.1).

It further details how education at all levels has the purpose of strengthening the problem solving capacity of the individuals, and hence the society, towards creating a better life. Through education, according to the document, human beings can not only identify harmful practices to replace them with the useful ones, but also preserve, develop and utilize their environment towards all-rounded development by diffusing science and technology into the society. Education also creates the condition for equality, mutual understanding and cooperation among people by way of promoting respect for human rights and democratic values (TGE, 1994).

The document emphasizes the important roles of education in the development efforts of the Ethiopian government and justifies the necessity of formulating a new policy that gives direction for education and training that will help in changing the alarming situations of the country at the time. Therefore, it can be observed that education has become one of the priority areas of government since the time of the transitional period wherein a comprehensive policy on education was among the urgent areas of action (MoE, 2001; TGE, 1994).

The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) articulates the importance of education as a justification for why the program is needed and how it can contribute to the overall development of the country (MoE, 1998). All the different phases of the program address this same issue in different manners, with a small shift pertinent to the overall atmosphere of the development plan of the respective periods.

The importance and value of higher education have been not only embedded in the general statements about education, but also specifically emphasized in different manners in the documents. The ETP, for instance, in its assessment of the chronic problems in education at the time, stated that "higher education institutions are found only in very few regions. They are overcrowded and their research capacity is very low" (TGE, 1994 p. 3).

Of course, this emphasis is very insufficient in that it represents only a small portion of the problems higher education had, and still has. However, it tells that the shortcomings of the subsector were recognized and used for justifying the necessity of the policy. It is worth noting that much of the need assessment and much of the respective emphasis of the ETP was on general (primary and secondary) education. Indeed, one cannot help but notice that in the 33-page document 'higher education' was mentioned only seven times reflecting how insufficiently the subsector was emphasized. Since the ETP is still the broadest governing document regarding education of all levels, the level of emphasis placed on any subsector can be seen as having an impact on the development of the same. By the same logic it can be argued that the complex problems in the Ethiopian higher education were caused by, among other things, the insufficiency of vision and direction given at policy level.

This can be supported by the observation that in the early phases of the ESDP, no clear articulation has been made about the role of higher education in development. Of course, it is only logical that at the early stage of education development, following the practices of other developmental states, the major emphasis given to primary education gradually extends to secondary, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and finally to higher education. Nonetheless, it was necessary to create such a clear picture of this progressive development, to be interpreted in terms of specific goals for each phase, which would have enabled the government to undertake the foundation work for the massive expansion that was to be introduced in the later stages of the program.

ESDP-II states that higher education is central in the national capacity building program of the country and that investment in higher education is "important for socio-economic development, which in turn is a critical prerequisite for sustained poverty reduction" (MoE, 2001, p. 47). Similarly, ESDP-III stresses that TVET and higher education are given the responsibility of training the manpower that is needed for the various kinds of development projects particularly in "infrastructure development, education, agriculture and health services" (MoE, 2005, p. 31).

However, these general statements have been articulated in neither a long term vision nor specific actionable targets. The HEP, in its part, justifies itself by referring to the importance of relevant and quality higher education and research in terms of efficiently satisfying the "Ethiopian peoples' aspirations of peace, democracy and development" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4976).

It is only in ESDP-IV that a clear long term vision is articulated in connection to the purpose the higher education subsector is expected to serve.

> For higher education, the goal is to develop highly qualified, motivated and innovative human resources and produce and transfer advanced and relevant knowledge for socio-economic development and poverty reduction with a view to turning Ethiopia into a middle-income country by the year 2025. (MoE, 2010a, p.9)

This vision, in other sections, is reinterpreted in what would be the specific targets for the particular phase of the program and indicators are identified for later evaluation purposes.

In summary, it can be noted that Ethiopia has assigned irreplaceable role in the overall development of the country to education in general, and higher education in particular. However, this only forms the foundation for the conception of the developmental state attributes in the education sector. Using the analytical framework, the following sections further examine the developmentalist nature of the Ethiopian higher education.

Level of state control

One of the well-established and sufficiently evidenced developmentalist characteristic of the Ethiopian higher education is the high level of state control over the system. Legal and strategic documents reveal that the government has a strong control that is underpinned by different mechanisms of influence and supervision. The need for centralized control is commonly justified by the state's desire to coordinate activities among concerned institutions within the education sector, as well as to coordinate the higher education system with other sectors and social policy areas, such as the economy.

There are a number of mechanisms devised for state control over the Ethiopian higher education system. The broadest and the strongest type of such mechanisms is the establishment of different laws and institutions, which together form the overall legal framework within which the system (HEIs and other concerned institutions and individuals) operates.

The HEP provides that all public institutions financed by the "federal government shall be established by regulation of the Council of Ministers… [those] financed by a state government shall be established by law enacted by the state" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4979). In the same manner, merger, splitting into two or more, changing names and dissolution of a public HEI are all done by regulation of the respective bodies (p. 5022).

The higher education proclamation recognizes or establishes institutions that have different kinds of involvement in the system and identifies their roles, powers, responsibilities and rights. All HEIs, except those established for religious teaching, are required to operate according to the proclamation and other legal directives issued by the concerned institutions authorized to do so by the proclamation. The Ministry of Education is mandated to issue

directives necessary for the implementation of the proclamation and regulations under the proclamation. The proclamation also establishes agencies under the Ministry – the Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC[2]) and Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) – and grants them considerable power to direct and supervise the HEIs.

The Ministry is endowed with a wide range of responsibilities enabling it to control the overall nature and direction of higher education in the country. Among others:

> …ensure that preparation and delivery of curricula of higher education are in accordance with international developments and national demands and requirements; approve and ensure the implementation of strategic plans of public institutions; conduct studies to identify as well as to meet the professional and intellectual manpower needs of the country; encourage government organs, professional associations, business organizations, and other appropriate persons to work jointly on matters concerning education, training, research, practicum or apprenticeship and research and technology transfer; (FDRE, 2009, pp. 5038-39).

HERQA, on its part, is granted powers and responsibilities related to controlling the quality and relevance of higher education. This includes evaluating and accrediting programs (as well as renewal of accreditation every three years), ensuring that institutions have the required capacity for enhancing internal quality, ensuring that education and training programs offered by HEIs are consistent with economic, social and other relevant policies of the country, evaluating institutions to make sure that they have met various standards set forth in the proclamation, etc. (FDRE, 2009, pp. 5039-41).

Even more detailed powers and responsibilities, typical to the kind of control a government agency might have in a developmental state, reside in the HESC. The center is given mandates that would allow it to deal with issues both at system and institutional level and that can effectively determine the nature and future direction of higher education in general. The following, among the list of powers and duties of the center, are archetypal in this regard (FDRE, 2009, pp. 5041-42).

a) prepare national strategy for the development of higher education and institutions;
b) prepare long-term national plans for the development of education and research within the system of higher education;
c) ensure that institution level planning and strategy are in line with the national higher education macro plan and strategy; and for this purpose, work closely with institutions; examine strategic plan agreements and, upon approval, follow up their implementation;
d) ensure that higher education is in line with the overall socio-economic development needs of the country and abreast global trends in orientation and approaches;

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[2] The HESC was later re-established as Education Strategic Center with extended responsibilities covering all levels of education

e) give opinion on higher education reform and development strategy and plan of the country;

Reporting and supervision constitute other mechanisms for state control. HEIs are required to collect and publish accurate and comprehensive statistical data on educational and financial matters (TGE, 1994). This, besides allowing for information exchange between HEIs and concerned bodies, enables the central government to follow on the capacity and performance of each HEI which can be used for supervision and planning purposes. However, though the policy prescribes it for all institutions, private institutions are not obliged to publish details of their financial statistics. Following the policy, the HEP also requires particularly public institutions to:

> (a) submit to, as the case may be, the Ministry or the appropriate state organ duly evaluated and approved annual performance and audited financial reports based on the strategic plan agreement; and publish the educational and expenditure data for the fiscal year…
> (b) furnish information to the Ministry or the concerned state organ whenever it is required to do so. Any public institution may be subject to supervision by the Ministry or the appropriate state organ to ensure its compliance with the law and strategic plan agreements (FDRE, 2009, p. 5027).

Besides the quarterly meeting of the Steering Committee, Annual Review Meeting is established in the ESDP as a mechanism of supervision. The meeting, involving a range of concerned bodies including donors, private institutions and NGOs, discusses performance in the implementation of the programs, identifies challenges and recommends solutions (MoE, 2001). Reports are also produced quarterly, bi-annually and annually.

For the public HEIs, financing establishes a strong tie with government. Public HEIs are funded by the federal or state government through block-grant system based on strategic plan agreements that run for five years period, and which shall be revised annually (FDRE, 2009, p. 5023). However, the application of block-grant system of funding is conditional to the capacity and preparedness of the institutions, line item or program budgeting being an alternative in practice.

While public HEIs are encouraged to generate their own income through different means, their capacity to do so is very limited. Also, public institutions are allowed to accept donations from third parties, provided that such donation may not negatively influence their mission. Loyalty to government direction is very important that it is protected by this provision restricting the ability of the public HEIs to negotiate with third parties on terms of donation.

Non-government owned and private HEIs may receive government subsidy, if they are not profit-oriented and if they strive to strengthen the developmental effort of the country in their services. The Ministry is empowered to issue directives on how non-profit private HEIs may

apply for budgetary subsidy or capacity building, and the mechanism of monitoring their use (FDRE, 2009, p. 5037).

Yet another very strong mechanism of state control over HEIs is the appointment of the top management. Governments may use mechanisms to make sure that the top management positions of universities are filled by individuals who are committed to the developmental directions and approaches/ideologies of the state. The procedures provided in the HEP for the selection and appointment of board members, presidents and vice presidents of public HEIs reveal that the government is directly or indirectly involved in the appointment of each.

The board, the supreme governing body of a public institution, according to the HEP, has seven voting members, and is accountable to the Ministry of Education. Four of the board members including the chairperson are directly appointed by the Minister. The remaining three voting members of the board are appointed by the minister upon nomination by the president of the institution (FDRE, 2009, pp. 5011-12). The president, who is also a non-voting member of the board, is appointed by the minister from a short list of nominees provided by the board. On the other hand, the vice presidents are appointed "based on merit and through competition by the board" (P. 5015).

Membership to the board of a public HEI has very vague requirements, nor is it publicly advertized. Only the positions of vice presidents are to be filled based on merit and competition. Moreover, the minister can remove the president from his/her position (p. 5019), and the Ministry can reform the board in part or in whole (p. 5012). Similarly, the board may remove the vice presidents from position, and the president in some exceptional cases.

In a nutshell, these complex relationships ensure that, by law of transitivity, the preference and ideological predispositions of individuals in top management of public HEIs originate from one source – the minister.

State control that comes through these different mechanisms stands in contradiction with the autonomy of the HEIs, which is widely elaborated in the HEP. Though state control gives important advantages for a more synchronized and coordinated developmental approach, it is also noticeable that undermining institutional autonomy is pressing against one of the fundamental features of academic institutions.

Put together, the Ethiopian higher education system has devised multiple mechanisms for state control. State control mechanisms, however, are not everything that a developmental state needs for effective planning and coordination in higher education. There is no sufficient evidence which shows that the education sector, and the higher education sub sector in particular, is sufficiently coordinated with other sectors, as it is within itself. Such coordination requires a central body responsible for continuously monitoring the other sectors and use data for coordinating the planning and implementation of education policies and strategies with that of other sectors. There is no clear statement as to the existence of a central

body responsible for the long term planning of higher education and for the coordination of such with the economic and other social policies. The HESC seems to have a broad range of responsibilities concerned with shaping the future of higher education, though coordination with other sectors in its activities seems overlooked.

Central admission procedures

The centralized admission procedure is, in a way, an extension of the quintessential character of higher education system in a developmental state – the central state control. The ETP appears to remain detached from the practice on the ground with regard to higher education admission procedures. It formulates secondary education to cover four years of duration consisting of two cycles of two years each. The first cycle is for general secondary education in which students will identify their interest for further education and world of work. The second cycle "will enable students to choose subjects or areas of training which will prepare them adequately for higher education and for the world of work" (TGE, 1994, pp. 14-15). Though stated here as if students have the possibility of choosing their line of study and career, twenty years after the issuance of the policy, admission is still done by a central body where only the small percentage top performers get to be assigned to the field and/or institution of their choice.

After completing the second cycle of secondary education, the policy requires students to "sit for examinations of relevant institutions for admission" (p.19). By this, the policy implies that the different institutions would have different entrance exams. It further calls for the establishment of a national organization of educational measurement and examination, but limits this organization only to providing central resources of professional support and expertise, and to coordinating from the center. However, the practice is rather that one centrally administered entrance exam is given and all admission is handled by the Ministry of Education.

In a more recent development, the 2009 HEP recognizes the role of central admission procedure by emphasizing the objective of higher education, among others, being to prepare "knowledgeable, skilled, and attitudinally mature graduates in numbers with demand-based proportional balance of fields and disciplines so that the country shall become internationally competitive" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4979). By this it implies that there is a need for making a centralized national level decision as to how many candidates should be accepted into different fields in order to maintain the required mix of professionals in the market to meet the competitive demands of the country.

The proclamation grants the Ministry the mandate to administer the university entrance examination and decide on eligibility for admissions to any institution. Further, the Ministry determines the admission requirements for students who completed secondary schools in other countries and the special circumstances and procedures for admission of adults, in consultation with concerned institutions. The Ministry (2010b) has also issued a directive for

the implementation of this provision – directive for placement of regular undergraduate students to public higher education institutions (Amharic).

Under the title 'Rights of Students' (pp. 5001-02) the proclamation makes no provision that makes it a right for students to choose an institution, department and/or field of study they want. Neither do they have the right to change from one institution, department or field of study to another.

The proclamation suggests that the centralized placement of students shall someday come to an end. The following paragraph depicts such a change:

> As and when direct selection of students for admission by public institutions becomes feasible and desirable, the Ministry shall limit itself to administering the entrance exam, deciding on pass marks and eligibility for admission, including entitlement to affirmative action, monitoring the admission process and ensuring compliance by institutions to its directives (p. 5004).

However, it remains unclear as to the circumstances under which the central student placement shall be dismantled. This calls forth the questions: is examination to remain indefinitely as a sole basis for determining admission to higher education? Will other competencies and skills remain having no place in higher education admission?

A point of interest here is that, for the 2015/16 academic year, the two science and technology universities (Adama and Addis Ababa) have administered their own entrance examination, coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST), to those candidates who already have scored a passing mark in the national university entrance examination.

This being an exceptional case, the Ministry remains fully in charge of admission and placement. All those who have passed the entrance exam will make their choice of institutions and specific programs. The Ministry then assigns students to different HEIs and specific programs. Though the criteria and procedures are not clearly stated, the directive (MoE, 2010b) states that the assignment, as much as possible, is made to accommodate the interest and choices of the students, while it also subscribes to the notion that assignments need to meet government's desire to produce certain combination of professionals as seen fit for the needs of the economy. From this, it can be argued that the central placement system deprives students of their right to pursue a field of study and career of their choices. Moreover, it appears that aptitude, motivation, and skills have no place in the placement process.

Technology transfer/learning from others

Learning from others, through research focusing on technology transfer, adaptation to fit to local needs and circumstances and dissemination of results to industry and society in general, forms one of the pillars of higher education within the developmental state paradigm. Such a purpose of HEIs can also be achieved through different engagements the institutions may have with their environment, such as consultancy services, non-formal short term trainings of different kind, partnerships with industry and community services. The idea of technology transfer is among the major dimensions of the Ethiopian higher education addressed in policy documents, extensively discussed on different platforms but far less put into practice (MoE, 2010a).

The ETP gives a generic recognition to technology transfer where it identifies one of the objectives of education and training to be the creation of competent citizens who, among other things, "show positive attitude towards the development and dissemination of science and technology in society" (TGE, 1994, p. 8). Similarly, the HEP sets objectives for higher education that include "promote and enhance research focusing on knowledge and technology transfer consistent with the country's priority needs" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4979). This objective not only emphasizes the importance of technology transfer but also implies the identification of priority areas for the country, though it remains unclear what these priorities are, who determines them and how HEIs' activities are practically linked to these priority areas.

The proclamation further directs the attention of research at institutional and individual level to focus on problem solving through technology transfer. It stipulates that research, in any institution, shall be focused on "promoting the relevance and quality of education and on the country's development issues focusing on transfer of technology" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4990). Besides, every institution is required to allocate sufficient fund specifically earmarked for research focusing on technology transfer and innovation. Institutions and their academic staff are also entitled to "enter into joint research and receive research funds from external and foreign sources if the research falls within the research standard, code of professional ethics, and norms of the institution" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4991). This provision provides the opportunity to do research with advanced systems and tap the available research funds in the international academic arena. In doing so, it creates better chance of knowledge and technology transfer not only in the content of the research itself but also in using the research facilities of the partner institutions, and learning more advanced methodologies.

The ETP provides for all levels of formal education to be complimented by non-formal education, which should be "concrete in its content, focusing on enabling the learners develop problem-solving attitudes and abilities" (TGE, 1994, p. 15). This is also reaffirmed in the HEP, which allows institutions to offer any type of degree, by the decision of their respective senates, besides those formally recognized by the proclamation. Moreover, HEIs may also offer short term trainings with the goal of "imparting knowledge and skills in specific fields, and award appropriate certificates" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4987). This flexibility in designing programs and trainings would enable HEIs to be responsive to the needs of market and the industry. Trainings focused on disseminating specific knowledge, building particular

skills, or transferring knowhow learned from elsewhere would be possible with such flexibility at disposal.

Endeavors of technology transfer can only be enhanced if appropriate channel is built between HEIs and their stakeholders – relationship with industry and the society at large. The ETP addressed this by stipulating that students, teachers and researchers in higher education would participate in programs that enable them to gain the necessary practical experience in their respective fields. It also provides that professionals of different organizations shall participate in teaching at HEIs (TGE, 1994). Similarly, the proclamation not only requires individuals and institutions to perform consultancy and other supplementary activities related to their areas of expertise, it also obliges HEIs to establish "cooperation relations with industries and other institutions in pursuit of its mission" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4982). These multi-directional and multi-dimensional relations that would be formulated to serve mutual benefits facilitate the possibility for the HEIs to understand the challenges of their partners and conduct researches that can resolve the challenges, while the partner institutions assist in the teaching and research functions of the HEIs.

While the legal framework addresses the issue in such a manner, the practical aspect (the ESDP) also follows up. ESDP-III, admitting that HEIs are not performing well in the areas of research and consultancy, states that they are expected to "produce new knowledge through research, serve as conduits for the transfer, adaptation, and dissemination of knowledge generated elsewhere in the world, and support government and business with advice and consultancy services" (MoE, 2005, p. 18). In order to meet this goal, research forms part of the job description for academic staff, who are supposed to spend a quarter of their time in research activities.

ESDP-IV goes even further and provides a well-articulated outline of actions for improving technology transfer. In the section that describes the policy and strategies for the higher education subsector it reads:

> …a framework for national research priorities will be developed in line with which HEIs will develop their own priorities… Universities will receive support for the establishment of research policies, including through innovation funds… university-enterprise partnerships shall be enhanced, ESDP-IV will extend support to selected universities for the creation of technology transfer business units and consultancy centers, in particular at Institutes of Technology (IoTs). ESDP-IV will also build the research and development system that gives emphasis to technology transfer and to expand and exercise useful technologies. This implies building the capacity of technology institutions in technology transfer by giving due emphasis to exercising and expanding useful technologies and making universities' research and development systems to be the principal factor to evaluate their outcome and contribution for country's development. The research and development system will

get due attention to have its own budget and capacity building program will be arranged (MoE, 2010a, p. 65).

However, the same document gives the primary responsibility of technology transfer for TVET institutions (p. 9) calling for them to become "centers for technology capabilities' accumulation and transfer" (p. 55). HEIs, on the other hand, are meant for "knowledge creation and transfer" (p. 64). While there is no harm in sharing the responsibility, if there is effective coordination mechanism in place, it is doubtful if the TVETs have the required capacity to do in-depth research on technology transfer and adaptation, while in the same fashion, the HEIs may not have the capacity for knowledge creation. What would have made a better sense is if HEIs were responsible to undertake the researches while TVETs provide tailored and practical training for lower and middle level professionals needed in the market.

Finally, an important issue pertinent to technology transfer is the choice of language of instruction. Countries that decide to catch up in development by learning from others are always faced with this critical decision, because language determines how much higher education systems can interact and engage in academic and research activities with other [more advanced] systems. Not only has Ethiopia chosen English to be language of instruction in secondary and higher education, it also has decided that English shall be taught as a subject starting from grade one (TGE, 1994; FDRE, 2009). Since a huge majority of academic literature and ongoing research projects are available in English – the international *lingua franca* of academics, this choice opens up the door of opportunity for accessing unlimited knowledge already accumulated elsewhere.

Diversity of institutions

Different HEIs may be set to serve different purposes, to perform different functions, to have different capacity and status, to garner different types and amount of resources, to set up different governance structures, to have different levels of specialization and focus, etc. Literature has shown that in the developmental state paradigm institutions are often established with such differences so that different types would serve different purposes within the overall mission of education in development.

Examination of the official documents reveals that such differentiation of HEIs seems to be largely missing from the Ethiopian higher education. Specifically, focusing on teaching at the higher education level, the ETP calls for research oriented approach which targets on problem solving capacity. Its statement which reads "higher education at diploma, first degree and graduate levels, will be research oriented, enabling students become problem-solving professional leaders in their fields of study and in overall societal needs" (TGE, 1994, p. 15) implies that there is no distinction among the institutions since all are to be research-oriented teaching institutions.

As the highest governing law of the subsector, the HEP is generally expected to provide details about how institutions may differ from one another – if they do. In the section

describing institutions as legal entities the HEP identifies four levels of status for HEIs: (1) university, (2) university college, (3) college, and (4) institute (FDRE, 2009). Though these types of institutions are not ranked in any particular order, from the requirements forwarded in subsequent articles one can infer the respective orders by looking at how tough the requirement is for each type of HEI. Further, there is no clear articulation of the differences between these types of institutions with regard to their nature and the respective roles they are expected to play in the higher education system. The proclamation does not mention anything about whether they have specific focus area, method of financing, status in recognition, teaching-versus-research orientation, etc. Besides, all institutions are endowed with the right to offer programs that lead to the award of any level of degree (1) Bachelor (BA/BSc); (2) Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM); (3) Master's (MA/MSc), or a Medical or other Professional Specialty; (4) Doctorate (PhD) or its equivalent; (FDRE, 2009, pp. 4982-83).

The proclamation sets out the same function for all HEIs where it says that "the core business of any institution shall be to offer education and training through regular programs, conduct research, and render community services" (p. 4987). Research is to be carried out by all institutions which are required to establish research and innovation fund and are granted the right to use research fund originating from non-public sources. Moreover, "every institution shall ensure that all and every one of its academic staff are engaged in study activities based on literature or research focusing on developmental issues" (p. 4990). This can be seen as a reflection of the determination to use academics as army of research to address the country's development issues.

Expansion of graduate programs (masters and PhD) has been the goal of both the third and fourth phases of the ESDP. This is primarily to meet the growing demand for qualified teaching staff that is created by the continuously increasing intake capacity at undergraduate level. Simultaneously, expanding graduate programs is also explained as a "strategy of revitalizing relevant and quality research undertaking" (MoE, 2005, p. 55) in all HEIs. The HEP also recognizes institutions for having different capacity for offering graduate programs and calls up on those institutions better endowed with resources in this regard to "assist, free of tuition charges and as a matter of national priority, in the academic staff development of less so endowed public institutions" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4994). However, both the ESDP and the HEP refrained from identifying specific institutions and dedicating them to this mission of training academic staff for higher education and conducting more research.

Another possible dimension of institutional diversity is the governance structure of institutions. The HEP puts strong restrictions on public HEIs in this regard, determining what their governance structure should look like (pp. 5006-07) and allowing restructuring when it is meant to achieve more effective performance in the fulfillment of the HEI's mission and, only if it is approved by the Board and endorsed by the Ministry. For the reorganization to take effect, the president "shall submit to the Board an exhaustive proposal discussed by the managing council, the university council, the senate, and by unions of students and teachers

of the institution" (p. 5007). Such a rigorous procedure of review and approval seems to have made it very difficult for institutions to change their organizational system.

Though the proclamation does not seem to appreciate diversity of institutions, what appears to be a more tangible differentiation of HEIs is introduced in ESDP-IV. In the higher education section the document sets a target of having established ten institutes of technology and two science and technology universities (MoE, 2010a), both by the end of the program (2014/15). Nevertheless, the document does not give any further explanations and justifications – it is not known if the institutes of technology will be independent institutions by themselves or as part of the already existing universities; what unique features these institutions will have; what differentiates science and technology universities from other traditional universities; what special arrangements will be made for these institutions, and so on.

It is also worth noting that, in the HEP, institutions are required to offer training in at least one field/discipline (which is the minimum requirement in the list), and are not required to conduct research. However, the experiences of other countries implies that institutes are rather specialized for certain field and engage in wide research activities in the area – often multi/inter disciplinary.

Focus on priority areas

A higher education policy and strategy in a developmental state is expected to identify a priority area that fits in the development plan of the country, articulate it in terms of targets and expected outcomes, define a systematic scheme for how to achieve it, designate the responsible institution(s) for coordinating activities and identify the role of each HEI in the process and setting out mechanisms of support. Though the policy, the HEP, and the ESDP documents make references several times to priority areas, there is hardly a clear articulation of what the priority areas are, what specific targets are expected or how they are to be achieved.

The notion that education and training has to be linked and integrated with development efforts in certain priority areas is first introduced in the ETP. One of the specific objectives of the policy is to "…make education, training and research be appropriately integrated with development by focusing on research" (TGE, 1994, p. 9). Similarly, the HEP identifies that one of the responsibilities of HEIs is to "undertake and encourage relevant study, research, and community services in national and local priority areas and disseminate the findings as may be appropriate" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4981).

The important question that follows would be: what exactly are these priority areas and how are they justified? In this regard, what the policy puts in its objectives as "the development and dissemination of science and technology in society" (TGE, 1994, p.8) seems to be the overarching focus area that has been repeated in the ESDP documents as well.

Primary and vocational education was focused in ESDP-I as a means of addressing the demands of the country and its economy. Therefore, expanding equitable access in these subsectors was set to be a strategic priority (MoE, 1998). Consequently, the share of budget in higher education was reduced in favor of boosting the share of primary education. This appears to be in line with the general practice of developmental states – identifying and pursuing priority areas that are relevant to developmental goals, which at the early stage of economic development are often concerned with building generally educated and vocationally trained workforce.

ESDP-II not only identifies the priority areas justified by the government's goal on poverty reduction, but it also names higher education and TVET as being its area of focus, given the responsibility they have in training the required skilled manpower. "Expansion of the road infrastructure, education, agriculture and health services" (MoE, 2001, p. 27) was identified as major areas where substantial number of trained manpower was required. This explicit statement about the specific role of higher education in the development of the country through emphasis on certain priority areas is a considerable improvement in its own. However, the document does not set specific targets for these priority areas (e.g. in terms of number of new programs to open or graduates to produce, etc.).

ESDP-III largely emphasizes attaining universal primary education by the year 2015 in its vision and mission for the education sector in general. Its fundamental thrust is described as being:

> to improve quality, relevance, equity, and efficiency and to expand access with special emphasis on primary education in rural and underserved areas, as well as the promotion of education for girls in an attempt to achieve universal primary education by the year 2015 (MoE, 2005, p. 6).

Assessing existing situations, the document asserts that expansion in higher education was guided "as per the national development priorities and skilled labor market demand" (MoE, 2005, p. 13), indicating that new degree programs were to be opened in teacher education, engineering, health, agriculture, ICT and business.

As for ESDP-IV, driven by the long term vision of transforming Ethiopia to a middle income level country by 2025, it stipulates that the economic transformation, among other things, requires a "conscious application of science, technology and innovation as the major instruments to create wealth" (MoE, 2010a, p. 11).

The two key outcomes most emphasized for higher education in ESDP-IV are:

(a) a balanced distribution of higher education opportunities throughout the country through the widening of access to higher education, in particular to science and technology; and

(b) increased student learning, personal growth and improved employability through high quality higher education and relevant professional mix (p. 9).

Focusing on balanced access to science and technology does not particularly point at improving the role of science and technology in economic development. The emphasis, therefore, remained focused on fairness of access. However, though it seems inconsistent (if not contradictory), ESDP-IV in later part sets targets that reflect the priority given to science and technology. It targets to increase the number of technology institutes to ten, and to open two universities of science and technology. This is further advanced by the goal of increasing ratio of intake in science and technology to that in social sciences and humanities from 58:42 in 2008/2009 to 70:30 in 2014/15 (p. 64).

Generally, it can be observed that the mass production of competent and innovative graduates in the fields of science and technology sums up the priority goal of ESDP-IV in the higher education subsector. The introduction of "high quality science and mathematics curricula at primary and secondary schools and ... the policy of the 70:30 university intake ratio" (p. 11) are devised as the major mechanisms to achieve this goal.

In the document there is no clear guideline stipulated on how the ESDP and the focus on science and technology shall be coordinated with the works of the Ministry for Science and Technology. Indeed, according to the establishing law of the Ministry, one of its major responsibilities is to facilitate conditions to ensure strong linkage among higher education, research and development and the industrial sector with regard to scientific research and technological advancement focusing on production activities (MoST, 2012). Nonetheless, nothing meaningful has been mentioned in the ESDP that ensures the co-working of these two concerned government bodies.

Massive expansion

A large scale of expansion is perhaps one of the typical features of education in Ethiopia at all levels in the past two decades. In higher education an unprecedented scale of expansion was started in late 1990s and early 2000s. Access and equity are the driving justifications for the ongoing expansion which is also considered one strategic dimension in the ESDP. The HEP states that to "ensure fairness in the distribution of public institutions and expand access on the basis of need and equity" (FDRE, 2009, p. 4979) is one of the objectives of higher education. This is further assured in the ESDP which outlined the establishment of new HEIs to be distributed over different regions of the country.

Another important factor that led to the expansion of higher education in Ethiopia was the apparent demand the country had for professionals of different kind needed to supply its development endeavor. While ESDP-I was restrictive in a sense that it preferred to limit expansion to a few areas that were deemed with high immediate demand, ESDP-II takes a broader look at the need for expansion.

> In a country such as Ethiopia where the sector is negligible in its development, where there is a huge demand for graduates (teachers, health workers, lawyers, engineers, etc) and where not only the current but also the future demand for highly trained personnel to serve the public sector as well as the growing private sector is large, it will be a dire necessity to develop and invest on higher education (MoE, 2001, p. 47).

When higher education expansion is planned in a poor country like Ethiopia, an immediate and crucial question the government faces is the question of how to finance it. In this regard four alternatives are apparently discernible: increased government budget, introduction of tuition fees and cost sharing, income generation by the HEIs, and encouraging private and non-government investment.

Table-1 Budget of higher education in ESDPs

ESDP	Higher Education Budget		Increase from previous phase	
	Amt ('000 Birr)	% share	Amt ('000 Birr)	% share
I	1,306,496	10.7	NA	NA
II	3,459,033	22.9	2,152,537	164.8
III	12,937,600	24.0	9,478,567	274.0
IV	30,516,000	21.7	17, 578,400	135.9

Source: compiled by author from MoE, 1998; 2001; 2005; 2010a

Increase in absolute amount as well as the relative share of higher education in the overall budget has been recorded in the ESDP along with the increase in the total budget of education relative to the overall budget of the country (see table-1). At the outset of the program, the main emphasis was on lower levels of education and expansion in higher education was meant to address immediate needs in certain sectors. However, as the program moved forward with later phases, higher education became more emphasized and this emphasis was manifested in expansion of the subsector.

The idea of tuition fees and cost sharing was first introduced in the ETP. The policy clearly puts that the priority of the government in financing was up to the completion of general secondary education, while an increasing cost sharing would be introduced for higher education. It also stipulated that appropriate mechanism shall be devised for students to cover their educational expenses through service or payment after graduation (TGE, 1994). This was brought into effect only in 2003 with the promulgation of the higher education proclamation (FDRE, 2003a) and later in the revised 2009 proclamation. Subsequently, a regulation (no.91/2003) by the Council of Ministers (FDRE, 2003b) provided the detail for the implementation of the cost sharing scheme. The HEP also allows HEIs to charge tuition fees which would be determined according to a directive their board would issue regarding the kind, amount and manner of payment (FDRE, 2009).

Allowing and encouraging public HEIs to generate income of their own to finance part of their activities was another measure introduced by the ETP. The policy states that "the

necessary conditions will be created for educational and training institutions to generate their own income and to use it to strengthen the educational process" (TGE, 1994, p. 32). This is reestablished in the HEP which reads as:

> …an income generating enterprise may be established by any public institution upon the request of the president and approval by the board; the enterprise shall have its own legal personality and operate, like any business organization, in compliance with all legal requirements; the initial capital required for the establishment of the enterprise may be a budget allocated by government. The institution shall use the net profits of the enterprise in the pursuit of its mission and objectives in accordance with the provisions of this Proclamation (FDRE, 2009, p. 5026).

Income generation was also one of the target outcomes of ESDP-IV which aspires that by the year 2014/15 (end of the planning period) 22 universities would be able to raise 5% of their budget from their own internal sources, which would be used to strengthen the relevance and quality of their services (MoE, 2010a). However, this seems a very small amount to ease the financial burden on the central government.

Finally, encouraging investment in education and training by non-government and private parties is another trend of development observed in Ethiopia. In this regard, the policy urges the government to "create the necessary conditions to encourage and give support to private investors to open schools and establish various educational and training institutions" (TGE, 1994, p. 32).

The HEP also considers private and non-government HEIs as partners that contribute in the development efforts of the government in the subsector. This is reflected in ESDP-III wherein it stipulates the modalities of engaging private investors and institutions:

> The private provision of higher education will be encouraged through the facilitation of quick access to incentives (e.g., land, tax exemption, etc.), provision of technical support and short-term training programs... Mechanisms to foster public-private partnerships will also be developed by undertaking joint studies and designing development strategies (MoE, 2005, p. 54).

By the time ESDP-III ended, private and non-government institutions accounted for 17.3 % of the student population in the country (MoE, 2010a), which is very small compared to the relative share they hold in terms of number of institutions.

Generally, ESDP-II can be taken as the actual beginning of the ongoing expansion program. It sets out goals for higher education expansion with specific numeric targets in undergraduate (30,000 per annum at the end of the planning period) and in graduate (6,000 per annum) programs; it stipulates the opening of new programs deemed necessary for economic development, and provides that opening of new institutions and upgrading the existing ones as a means for intake increase. It also outlines the need for major undertakings

in certain selected HEIs to increase graduate admission as well as diversity of programs at masters and PhD levels. It also acknowledges the contribution of private HEIs in terms of increasing capacity (MoE, 2001), though it refrains from putting a clear target in that regard.

The document also recognizes the changes that are necessary to come about with the expansion of the subsector in terms of infrastructure, facilities, qualified teachers and leadership and management capacity. It stipulates the need to increase the capacity of teaching staff and the leadership in terms of number and qualification locally as well as abroad, and stresses the need for establishing a clear and comprehensive legal framework specifically for the subsector. The 2003 higher education proclamation is consequently promulgated.

The expansion is predominantly financed by the state and is focused on ensuring fairness and equity in the distribution of HEIs in different regions. This predisposition has caused the government to open as many universities as possible in different regions which are the same to one another, as opposed to strengthening and specializing the existing ones in line with the needs of the economy and towards maximization of their economic contribution. Partnership between the private and public HEIs is also deemed to be very low and ESDP-III called for strengthening such partnerships, though nothing has been reported in ESDP-IV.

Higher education for non-economic functions

Though the primary characteristics of higher education in the developmental state paradigm relate to addressing economic needs, through production of the required human power and undertaking research aimed at accelerating economic growth, the non-economic functions of higher education also take a pivotal place. Since developmental state materializes in countries with multitude of challenges, HEIs are also expected to serve purposes that are related to nation building – creating an environment and spreading values that are crucial in building stable state. Such issues are addressed both in the ETP and HEP.

The policy (TGE, 1994), referring to all levels of education, envisages as its ultimate goal, bringing up citizens:

> who are endowed with humane outlook, countrywide responsibility and democratic values having developed the necessary productive, creative and appreciative capacity in order to participate fruitfully in development and the utilization of resources and the environment at large (p. 6);… who respect human rights, stand for the well-being of people, as well as for equality, justice and peace, endowed with democratic culture and discipline (p. 7); …who stand for democratic unity, liberty, equality, dignity and justice, and who are endowed with moral values (p. 10).

The policy also aspires for education and training that promote the culture of respect for work, positive work habits and high regard for workmanship, in which traditional education

will be "improved and developed by being integrated with modern education" (TGE, 1994, p. 25).

Similarly, the HEP stipulates that the higher education system shall be oriented towards such values both in institutional practice as well as in the content and approach of the teaching-learning process. This can be observed in the objectives of higher education which include, among others:

> ensuring that education and research promote freedom of expression based on reason and rational discourse and are free from biases and prejudices; promoting and upholding justice, fairness, and rule of law in institutional life; promoting democratic culture and uphold multicultural community life (FDRE, 2009, p. 4979).

As an extension of this the HEIs are expected to have guiding values such as "a culture of fighting corruption; economical use of resources and effective maintenance of assets" (FDRE, 2009, p.4981). However, it is be highly doubtful if the HEIs have the institutional capacity to demonstrate and promote such values.

In the ESDP, on the contrary, the issue seems to be less emphasized. ESDP-II reinforces the ETP in its predisposition on nation building through promoting certain values but defends that it was too early to practically see the changes realized in such aspects.

> The education system will be revitalized so that it nurtures and produces responsible citizens who participate actively in and also knowledgeable about public affairs. To this end, the central mission of all educational institutions will be to provide citizenship education (MoE, 2001, p. 32).

Though the document says that many and varied activities will be planned in order to achieve this central mission, no further elaboration was given, and neither was the issue addressed in depth in the consequent phases.

In response to the growing tensions among students of public HEIs, in 2011 the Ministry of Education (in collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Affairs) has issued a guideline that is intended to promote religious tolerance, development and democracy under multi-ethnic federalism, and peaceful learning environment. The document provides detailed guidelines that aim to regulate everyday interaction among students, teachers and other HEI staff such as religious practices, dressing and dining manners and the like. This demonstrates the notion that higher education is used for addressing the pertinent issues of the country targeting on strengthening the nation state by bringing about stability and promoting certain selected values desired at national level.

Generally, neither the legal documents nor the strategies on education development view higher education to be a purely economic instrument. A repeated statement has been made about the non-economic functions of higher education in shaping citizens with desired values

and in terms of contribution in state building. HEIs are required to promote such values both in their institutional practice as well as in the content of their teachings and research.

Conclusions

The Ethiopian higher education system shows strong resemblance to that of the developmental states. The objective of the Ethiopian higher education, stated in Article 4 of the 2009 proclamation, to prepare "knowledgeable, skilled, and attitudinally mature graduates in numbers with demand-based proportional balance of fields and disciplines so that the country shall become internationally competitive", is typical reflection of the nature of a developmental state that targets at improving the economic standing of a country by considering its international comparative advantage using a mix of economic and human capital policies. Likewise, the major characteristics of higher education in developmental states, as identified in the analytical framework, are vividly perceived in the examined documents. Nonetheless, there are also observed shortcomings which could potentially inhibit the system from realizing its expected advantages.

Therefore, it is possible to answer the research question as: the Ethiopian higher education does indeed correspond well with the tenets of those in early stage developmental states, but with limitations of its own.

First, there is a lack of clarity with regard to how higher education is coordinated with other development and social policies and who is responsible to oversee this coordination. The 2009 National Employment Policy and Strategy, which states that the public sector accounts for about 68% of the employment among those with higher education, strongly stresses on the seriousness of the gap between the demand and supply sides of the labor market. This implies that economic policies directed to improving the private sector and the strategies in higher education development should be in tune with each other. Internally, a clear outline is not laid for how emphasis would move from one level of education to another in tune with the corresponding changes in the economy, and development in general.

Second, there are inconsistencies in the documents that lead to the assertion that the different laws, policies and strategies for higher education are set separately and independently with a very loose link among each other. It can be seen that there is lack of a long term and well-articulated vision that serves as an umbrella for all actions that need to be taken in the subsector. There are ample examples of such inconsistency and shortsightedness. For instance, the education and training policy, the broadest framework of action in education at all levels, ultimately concerns itself with improving access at lower level (which was the most pressing problem of the time the policy was issued). Once access was sufficiently expanded at lower levels, it was imperative to move on to the higher levels to which the policy lacks provision of guidance. Similarly, the early phases of the ESDP were entirely concerned with expanding access at lower levels which forced the later phases to abruptly introduce changes to higher education without enough foundations laid down and necessary

connections established. The same can be said about the issue of quality. A far-sighted policy framework should be able to predict the impact of expansion on quality and come up, from the very beginning, with methods of maintaining and improving quality rather than focusing on the expansion, at one time, and then suddenly shifting resources towards improving quality after a good amount of loss in that aspect has been suffered.

Also, it is observed that there are discrepancies between the HEP and the ESDP about certain issues such as diversity of institutions. While the proclamation provides a monotonous definition of HEIs that fails to recognize diversity, in time it was realized that new type of institutions –science and technology universities for instance – are needed and hence had to be created in ESDP-IV. Such differences indicate that the documents are concerned with addressing issues at hand and are shortsighted in that they fail to provide a wider scope with in which future changes and demands could be accommodated.

Third, though technology transfer is put as one of the central ideas in education strategy and in development narratives in general, there seems to be a lack of clarity as to how it materializes and who is responsible for it to take effect. In the proclamation knowledge and technology transfer are put to be among the main functions of HEIs while the main responsibility for the same is given to TVET institutions in ESDP-IV. Knowledge and technology transfer requires extensive research undertakings to identify what is to be transferred and how to adapt it to the local needs. However, TVET institutions do not have research capacity fit for this responsibility; rather they are strong in training lower and middle level professionals. Besides, such coordination between the HEIs and TVET institutions appears missing.

Fourth, while different mechanisms are in principle set out as a means to finance expansion of higher education, the huge majority of the resources come from government budget. Similarly, the expansion is mainly crafted and pushed forth by the state, rather than being driven by demand (which often requires egalitarian distribution of income creating more middle class that is willing and able to invest in education and in turn attracting more private institutions to provide higher education). Reflecting the overall nature of the Ethiopian developmental state, the share of the government in the higher education is substantially large. Even after two decades since higher education has been opened for private investment, the share of private HEIs in terms of student population remains just about one-fifth. As a result, the contribution of the private sector in easing the financial burden of expansion on the government is very small.

On the other hand, the expansion appears to be dominated by the atmosphere of ethnic politics where fair distribution of public HEIs and expanding access in all regions has preoccupied the pattern of the establishment of institutions. Hence number has been highly emphasized and some HEIs have been established in remote areas where there are low facilities and it is very difficult to attract and maintain qualified academic staff – significantly compromising quality.

Fifth, while of course absolute institutional autonomy is fundamentally contradictory to the notion of the developmental state, the Ethiopian higher education proclamation seems to have offered a massive institutional autonomy to HEIs. However, in what looks like a compensatory move, the proclamation takes back the institutional autonomy by posing a number of requirements and restrictions. For example, institutions are autonomous in choosing their area of research (as part of academic freedom); however, in other instances they are required to define their research programs to be consistent with the government priority; they are allowed to receive donation but they are not allowed to alter their mission because of it – (if a university receives money for research from a third party on the condition that it will be engaged in a certain area of research and if that happens to be not within the priority area of the government, the institution is no position to negotiate). The proclamation calls for participation of society in the governance of institutions and democratic leadership, but the appointment of top management to HEIs is nothing democratic. Institutions are allowed to prepare and implement organizational structure, but any change to organizational structure has to be only to improve efficiency and has to go through a rigorous review and approval. Institutions are not at liberty to set their own values, rather they have to uphold what is set for them. Also, the Ministry reserves the right to annul the decisions of the board, to reform the board in part or in full, to fire the president, etc.

Implications of the findings

Proper and effective coordination of higher education policies and strategies with other social and development policies requires a specific institution designated responsible. Such an institution should be engaged in research, coordinate its activities with other agencies and set the directions of higher education, considering both the demand and supply sides, based on evidence and future plans of the country. Considering the mandate given in the proclamation, the HESC appears to be the closest to this responsibility, if it is strong enough to have the capacity for effectively discharging those mandates.

A long term, vision-driven policy framework needs to be established: that would serve as an umbrella for all legal and strategic establishments. The framework should be vivid enough to be interpreted in to smaller scope plans and wide enough to accommodate changes that are likely to happen over a reasonable period of time in the future. Only in this way can there be consistency between the different versions of the plan.

In pursuing technology transfer as an instrument of development through learning from others, more effective coordination is needed between HEIs, TVET institutions and other private and government bodies, such as the Ministry of Science and Technology. The Ministry, being in charge of overseeing the overall activities, shall set the areas of priority at a macro level, and the HEIs then identify the relevant technology and engage in research to adapt it to local needs, while the TVET institutions train professionals on the practical application of the technology. Moreover, industry and society at large have to be widely engaged in the whole process.

While the public sector accounts for a significant majority of the formal sector employment, the private sector remains small and weak for managing the supply and demand of education and training in the country. Therefore without being more open to private investment, unemployment is unlikely to change and individuals' motivation to take up higher education will be discouraged – in effect discouraging the growth of the private higher education. On the other hand, too small a private sector leaves all the burden of financing expansion on the government – keeping away its attention and resources from more pressing reforms. A developmental state is not equivalent to state owned development, it is rather state planned and directed. Moreover, the expansion of HEIs into remote regions shall be reconsidered, the alternative being focusing on improving the existing ones. If at all further expansion is required, it has to be based on the economic benefits it could produce, rather than fairness in distribution. Those in poor conditions should be revitalized with investment towards making them specialized institutions pertinent to the economic and environmental context of their localities which could attract more staff and students interested in the respective fields of specialization.

What one hand gives the other takes – that is the state of institutional autonomy in the Ethiopian higher education. There is a need to make a clear separation in the areas where institutional autonomy is necessary, such as in academic freedom and research financed by third parties, and to limit autonomy particularly on defining the contribution of HEIs in developmental projects and on how public money is used by the institutions.

Need for further inquiries

The findings of this research indicated that the Ethiopian higher education clearly demonstrates indicia of the developmental state concept. However, this research was meant only to provide a preliminary view that establishes insight into the issue by examining certain documents and related literature as its source of data. It did not deal with details of the practical aspects on the ground.

Therefore, taking this research as a starting point, future inquiries need to go deeper looking at aspects of both policy making and implementation, and by incorporating primary data pertinent to both processes. Furthermore, the developmental nature of the Ethiopian higher education needs to be carefully examined in terms of each of the major aspects identified in this study.

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School Based Continuous Professional Development Practices at a Selected General Secondary and Preparatory School in Bahir Dar Town

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Abstract: Since 2004 School based Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has been implemented in Ethiopian schools with the aim of improving the classroom practices of teachers and consequently improving the achievement of students. However, different reports have revealed that CPD in these schools is not achieving its intended purposes. This necessitates the need to reflect on the CPD practices in our schools so far vis-à-vis the review of the literature on what constitutes successful school based CPD so as to draw lessons for improvement. This study is an attempt to analyze the CPD practices of a selected Secondary and Preparatory school found in Bahir Dar city in light of this review. The study employed a qualitative methodology guided by the interpretive paradigm. Two groups of teachers, the school principal, the cluster supervisor and the school CPD facilitator were purposely selected as sources of data for the study. Interview, focus group discussion and document analysis were used as data gathering tools. Data were analyzed thematically. The analyses of the data revealed that the CPD practices at the selected General Secondary and Preparatory school do not have the basic features of successful teacher professional development programs. Though the administrative structure to run the CPD program is set at school level, the school context is not supportive enough to run the program; the CPD program is not strongly linked with the school improvement program and students' achievement; and it is not engaging the teachers. So, serious consideration should be given mainly to the capacity development of all the actors involved in the delivery of the program.

Keywords: Continuous professional development, teacher learning, Ethiopia

Introduction

Educational institutions at all levels throughout the world are in a period of rapid change (Collis & Moonnen, 2001). They are in a continuous struggle to provide their students with the appropriate knowledge and skills for evolving marketplaces and complicated living environments, and preparing citizens for lifelong learning (Haddad & Jurich, 2002). There have been large-scale educational reforms at all levels of education aimed at meeting specifically the needs of students in the 21st century and, generally enhancing the quality of education. The reforms mostly aim at major changes in curriculum development, teaching methodology and assessment (Kwakman, 2003 cited in Minale, 2006).

Teachers and teaching are arguably the strongest school-level determinants of student achievement (Schwille & Dembele, 2007). Researchers, policy makers, and program

designers, implementers, and evaluators, therefore are looking for ways of understanding teacher quality and teacher learning focusing on effective and promising teacher improvement programs. There is a consensus that teachers should be involved in various professional development programs which are aimed at improving their knowledge, skills and attitude that could effectively address the needs of their students (Villegas-Reimer, 2003).

There have been various justifications on why teacher professional development programs are given great emphasis. For instance, Smylie and Conyers (1992) cited in Dilworth and Imig (1995) mentioned rapid changes in the characteristics, conditions and learning needs of students, development in knowledge about teaching and learning, and ongoing pressures for accountability and reform on schools as reasons for lack of emphasis on professional development programs. Moreover, Guskey (2000) has discussed that the current educational reform are intending to achieve new levels of competencies such as critical thinking, problem solving and new cultures of teaching and learning. Promoting these cultures of teaching and learning require teachers to adapt new pedagogical approaches. Fullan (2007) also asserted that effective staff development is an essential and indispensable process without which schools and programs cannot hope to achieve their desired goals to improve students' achievement. Overall, it has become quite obvious that every proposal to reform, restructure, or transform schools should emphasize teachers' professional development as the primary vehicle in bringing the needed change (Guskey, 1994 in Minale, 2006).

Generally, faced with rapid change, demands for high standards and calls for improving quality, teachers have now an immense need to update and improve their skills through professional development. Although, since the mid-1980s, professional development has been the focus of considerable research, most of this literature provides compelling evidence that a significant number of schools have not implemented effective professional development programs (Craft, 2000; Schwille & Dembele, 2007). After analyzing different models of professional development, Schrum (1999) summarized that there is very little evidence that those staff development made a difference on teachers' practice. Moreover, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) in Schrum (1999) asserted that attempts made to bring change have been so frustratingly wasteful because thousands of workshops and conferences led to no significant change in practice when the teachers returned to their classrooms.

The failures of the teacher professional development programs to bring a change in the classroom have caused a shift in the approach (Craft, 2000; Surgue, 2004). There is a shift of funding and responsibility for professional development of teachers on to schools and on to the individuals within them. Craft (2000) relates this change with the idea that being a professional means taking responsibility for identifying and attempting to meet the professional development needs of oneself and one's institution. The shift is generally from the individualistic focus on professional development, through the dominant apprenticeship and course-based models of learning to that of the group focus on professional learning based in and/or focused on the school and its collective needs.

Generally, this new approach to professional development indicates a trend towards a broader view of what constitutes professional development, and towards a greater emphasis on what happens before an in-service training event (needs identification) and afterwards (evaluation and follow-up) (Craft, 2000; Schewille & Dembele, 2007). In this approach, the professional development activities mainly take place in schools. The leadership, in this regard, is responsible to design, implement, follow and evaluate the professional development activities taking place in the school.

The international experiences tell us that well-structured and properly designed professional development programs can influence teachers' classroom practices and help to improve students' achievements. High ranking countries in international exams (such as Program for International Student Assessment, PISA) are known to have strong teacher professional development systems that contribute to their rank (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Wei, Andree & Darling-Hammond, 2009). The major features of the professional development programs of these countries include: building ample time for professional learning and team work into teachers' work hours; providing ongoing professional development activities that are rooted in teachers' contexts and focused on the content to be taught; arranging extensive opportunities for both formal and informal in-service development which includes both school-based activities and off-site courses; implementation of well supported induction programs for new teachers; and having school governance structures that involve teachers in decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development.

In the reviews of successful professional development experiences of the high achieving nations in the world (e.g. Darling Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Gulamhussien, 2013), some distinct characteristics have emerged. In these programs, the primary goal is deepening teachers' knowledge of specific curriculum content and the skill of how to teach it to students. It also helps teachers to understand how students learn that specific content. Teachers are engaged in the process and the programs enable them to acquire new knowledge, apply it to practice, and reflect on the results with colleagues. It is predominantly collaborative, collegial, intensive and sustained over time. Moreover, from the successful experiences of Japan and China, it has been learned that the best place for teachers to learn about new practices is the classrooms (Schewille & Dembele, 2007). In other words, teachers in these countries use their classrooms as laboratories for their professional development.

Schools in countries with successful professional development programs also get professional support from outsiders like university researchers and other educational leaders during the design and implementation of the CPD programs including direct support to teachers in trying out new ideas and practices into their classrooms (Schewille & Dembele, 2007; Gulamhussien, 2013; Goodwin, 2012). The schools are systematically networked with teacher support centers and higher education institutions. This helps the teachers in grappling with the real challenge of practicing new ideas in the actual classroom. Modeling is also

found as a highly effective way to introduce new concepts to teachers and help them apply it (Gulamhussien, 2013).

Context, process and content can be taken as a conceptual framework to look at CPD implementation at school level. In this regard, successful school based professional development programs require establishing conducive school culture, choosing appropriate CPD approaches or processes, and choosing appropriate contents (Eston, 2004; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Chappuis, Chapuis, & Stinggins., 2009; Nieto, 2009). A collaborative rather than a competitive school culture is basic to run successful CPD programs. A belief that 'everyone in the school is a learner' should be reflected among the school community's day to day activities. The leadership should provide sufficient professional as well as material support to CPD programs in the schools including arrangement of adequate amount of time and resources so that teachers would feel that CPD is seriously taken as an integral part of the school's mission.

In choosing relevant contents or topics for CPD activities in the schools, Deojay & Pennigton (2004a), emphasize the need to begin with the analysis of students' achievement. They argue that the contents that teachers should learn through CPD should be directly linked to the learning gaps of students. This is related to the fact that the ultimate goal of CPD is improving students' overall performance. This would also enable teachers see the link between their professional growth to measureable student results. Teachers take CPD seriously when they feel that it is strongly linked to their students' learning as they are accountable to the achievement of students who are currently enrolled in their classrooms.

The CPD processes refer to those possible strategies that will help teachers learn and help them make changes that affect student achievement. The literature reveals that the CPD process should be diversified and engaging to the teachers (Easton, 2004; Gulamhussien, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2009). The selection of the CPD strategies should primarily consider the selected contents as well as the available human and material resources in the school, and teachers should be given the opportunity to follow different alternatives. Moreover, the methods should encourage the teachers for conversation and critical reflection on their practices in the light of their colleagues' views and new developments in the academic discourse (Schewille & Dembele, 2007; Brookfield, 1995). They must involve classroom application of the contents to be learned. In this regard, collaborative and team approaches like collaborative planning, lesson study, and action research of various kinds are mostly applied in schools with successful CPD programs (Darling Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). These approaches are also usually accompanied by increasing opportunities for teachers to share their expertise with one another.

Careful planning and implementation of collaborative or team based CPD processes in schools always pay off in the end. In this regard, Chappuis, et al., (2009) has emphasized the important role of facilitators. The facilitators in each team should have the skills to ensure that everyone in the team is engaged in a meaningful way. They should be able to establish a team environment in which all members feel safe and supported. They should know how to

keep the focus of the discussion to its main objective of improving teachers' classroom practices and consequently improving students' achievements. For this to happen, CPD team facilitators should be able to get adequate support so that they could be able to maintain their knowledge base, level of enthusiasm, and facilitation skills to be effective in their roles. It is also suggested that in team based approach clearly articulated protocols would help to create community of learners who work respectfully and efficiently (Eston, 2004).

This study is an in-depth analysis of the CPD implementation at a selected school in Ethiopia. The experiences of different countries in the implementation of school based CPD as well as the conceptual reviews presented above are the bases for this study.

Statement of the Problem

The Ethiopian education and training policy gives due emphasis to teacher professional development as one area of special attention and action priority (MoE, 1994). While discussing the previous teacher education practice in Ethiopia, the TESO document (MoE, 2003) indicated that many teachers at different levels of the education system received only the minimum of initial training. Even from those teachers who have upgraded their knowledge in a variety of ways, very few have the skills and knowledge required to deliver the modern, child-centered, dynamic education experiences envisaged in the Policy. Regarding teacher education and classroom practices, the following is stated:

> … large amount of money and other resources have been invested in the education and training of teachers in both colleges and schools, yet it is abundantly clear that this investment has been largely ineffective in that it has not been matched by any great changes in the classroom practice of most teachers throughout the country (MoE, 2003; p.105).

This mismatch can be a major obstacle in bringing about change in the quality of education being offered at schools in Ethiopia. In an attempt to address the mismatch, in addition to the common pre-service and in-service trainings given to teachers to upgrade to another grade-level, CPD has been highly recommended by the Ministry of Education. The CPD of teachers was considered as essential in maintaining and enhancing the quality of the achievement of the educational mission countrywide (MoE, 2003). As a result, a national staff development guideline that focuses on national priorities which includes the topics derived from the needs analyses, formats, patterns and modes of provision were prepared. Modules that included different issues of CPD were centrally prepared and the schools all over the country were required to implement it.

The CPD programs being implemented in the Ethiopian schools show that the government is following the shift from the course-led model to that of group-focused and school-needs based model. At policy level, it is issued that every teacher should accomplish a 60 hour CPD activities annually (MoE, 2006). Since 2003, except newly employed teachers, all the

teachers in the primary and secondary schools of Ethiopia have participated and completed the four CPD modules that are nationally prepared. These CPD modules are developed based on the national assessment result on the efficiency and effectiveness of teachers in Ethiopia (MoE, 2003). Each school takes the responsibility of facilitating the training based on the modules. These all mark the introduction of the new school-based model of CPD which gives schools the major role of designing and running the professional development of their teachers.

Currently, schools are running their own CPD programs. As the nationally designed modules are already completed, schools are now in charge of designing, implementing and evaluating the CPD programs which are tailored to their particular needs. To support this, MoE has also developed a CPD framework and toolkit that could guide the school based CPD program and distributed them to all the schools. However, different government reports are showing that the performance of the schools so far in this regard is not satisfactory (MoE, 2013; MoE, 2014; Haromaya University, 2007). The CPD programs in the schools are not achieving the desired objectives of helping the professional development of the school teachers and consequently improving students' achievement. International experiences in this regard tell similar stories of different countries in their attempt to introduce school based CPD with the aim of improving students' learning. So what is vital now is to reflect on the school based CPD program implementation in our schools so far and draw lessons from the strengths and weaknesses in the light of best experiences of a few countries in the world.

This research is then designed to evaluate the CPD practices at a selected Secondary and Preparatory School in Bahir Dar town against the international best experiences. Specifically, it is designed to answer the following research question:

- How is the CPD program organized and being implemented at the selected Secondary and Preparatory Schools?

Unlike the previous studies conducted about CPD in Ethiopia which are predominantly survey, this study is an in-depth analysis of CPD implementation in a selected secondary and preparatory school. Accounts of the research can benefit teachers, supervisors, principals and educational officers, who are involved directly or indirectly in the program, to revisit or strengthen their practice on the issue under study. The results could also give an opportunity for all stakeholders to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the CPD programs in Ethiopian schools vis-à-vis international best practices in the area. By and large, the results may help these stakeholders to further strengthen the good sides and to find solutions to the challenges schools face in practicing school based CPD in the effort towards ensuring quality education. The focus on one school only could be taken as one of the limitations of the study. The study also focuses only on the analysis of the CPD process and the views of the stakeholders on its impact rather than on the ultimate goal of CPD which is the impact it has on the students' achievement. This could also be another limitation.

Research Design and Methodology

The main purpose of this research is to evaluate the CPD system at the selected Secondary and Preparatory School in the light of international best practices described in the review of the literature. To achieve this objective a qualitative methodology guided by the interpretive paradigm is employed.

The target School for the study is found in Bahir Dar city. The data sources include principals, supervisors, teachers and CPD facilitators. These people are assumed to be the major actors as leaders and participants in the CPD program in the school. A total of 16 participants (1 cluster supervisor, 2 principals, 1 CPD facilitator, and 12 teachers) have been participated. Teachers in the schools are normally grouped into 29 CPD teams on the bases of the subject matter they teach. Each team has got three to six members. There is a shift system in the school. One teacher only teaches in one shift that is either in the morning or in the afternoon. Two groups of teachers, each having eight members from the two shifts, were selected for focused group discussion. The eight members were selected from each of the eight randomly selected CPD teams in each shift. The principal, the cluster supervisor and the school CPD facilitator were selected using purposive sampling technique for interview. These respondents are believed to have a strong link to the implementation of the CPD program in the school. Documents were also other sources of data.

Focused group discussion, document analysis, and interview were applied in order to collect the necessary data for the study. Focused group discussions were held with selected teachers of the school. Some guiding questions that instigate the teachers to reflect on their CPD experiences were used. In-depth interviews were also held with the supervisor, principal and the school CPD facilitator mainly on the design and management aspect of the CPD program in the school. The focuses of the interviews and the focus group discussion were on those CPD implementation aspects such as school context related factors, process related factors, content related factors as well as factors related to professional support. Documents like the CPD framework and toolkit, the school CPD annual plan, minutes of teachers' CPD meetings, and teachers' portfolios were reviewed.

To maintain the credibility of the instruments, the researcher made an effort to confirm whether the guiding interview questions could answer the leading questions proposed or not. Experts in the area were also consulted in order to make sure that the interview items were valid. As a result, the 15 interview items that had been formulated first were refined and reduced to 12 items. Similar procedure has been followed with regard to the items for focused group discussion. Moreover, the transcribed data was checked with translated text to enhance credibility of the data.

Discussions were made in Amharic and all parts were tape-recorded. The researcher transcribed and analyzed the data to check whether the status of the school CPD practice is high or low using the criteria derived from the international best school based CPD practices.

In addition, extracts obtained through document reviews were incorporated into the analysis. Thus, the data were analyzed using qualitative descriptions specifically using narration, categorization and thematic analyses.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents the results of the study. The presentation is organized around the main themes that are derived from the international best CPD practices. Predominantly, the leading questions guide the analysis part of this section.

Organizational Structure and Support to CPD

The school has a CPD policy that is derived from the National Policy (MoE, 2006). Accordingly, the school has adopted the policy and set up a structure to run the 60 hours CPD program. The respondents have confirmed this during the focus group discussion and the interview. A teacher in the focus group discussion mentions this saying "…*every year it starts in September and continues throughout the year for a total of 60 hrs….*" According to the principal, the school commits one teacher to fully engage in the facilitation of the program. This person has the responsibility of liaising between the school principals and supervisors with the teachers in designing and running the CPD program. He coordinates the CPD needs assessment process at the beginning of the year and prepares the school CPD plan in consultation with the school principal. He has also the responsibility of following up the day to day progress of the program throughout the year.

The principal further explains that structurally, at the school level there is a CPD committee chaired by the CPD facilitator. Teachers at the bottom are grouped on the basis of the kind of subject matter they teach. Each group has 5-6 members and there are around a total of 20 such groups in the school. In each group, one member works as a facilitator. The facilitators of the groups form the members of the school CPD committee. The committee meets once in a month or so and discuss about the progress of the CPD program. According to the CPD facilitator, this is one mechanism of following up the implementation of the program in the school. The principal and the vice principal for academic affairs oversight the overall CPD process in the school. The cluster supervisor also was supposed to work in parallel with the principals to provide technical support to the CPD program.

But none of the data show if there is a link between the school and other academic institutions (like universities or colleges) in running the program. But the experiences of Japan show that academic institutions are also engaged with the schools in support of the CPD programs through their expertise and researcher (Schewille & Dembele, 2007).

Apart from the national CPD framework and toolkit, the school doesn't have the access to different reading materials. Talking about reference materials, the principal say that:

"the books in the school library focus more on subject matters than on pedagogy. Teachers in this school have served as teachers for more than 10 years. Due to the lack of access to reading materials related to pedagogy, their readings in the area are limited."

This situation may deny them the chance of looking on their practices and assumptions in the light of new developments in the field of pedagogy related to their subject (Brookfield, 1995). Moreover, with regard to the practicality of follow up and support, the CPD facilitator and the supervisor claim that they follow up and give support to the program. The CPD facilitator has explained the follow up and support as follows:

All the teachers are expected to meet for two hours weekly and do their CPD according to their annual CPD plan on the selected priorities. I also use checklist to follow up whether the teachers are actually implementing their plan or not. There is also a reporting system to me from the CPD groups. The group facilitators are expected to report to me about their weekly meetings in written form. They also file their reports… with regard to support I myself visit some groups during their CPD meetings and also those who have questions come to me and we discuss.

But still they also admit that teachers are reluctant and there is a tendency of one to copy the work of the other when developing their portfolios.

Teachers on the other hand argue that even if the structure through which teachers could get professional support on CPD is there in the school from the CPD facilitator, the supervisor and the principal, practically it is nonexistent. During the focus group discussion, one of the participants said that:

… there is no single person who understands CPD deeply …there is not one who follows up the program, we simply write false reports and put them in our 'portfolio' for the sake of fulfillment.

Another participant also says:

… for the teacher to be seriously engaged in CPD, there must be someone, who understands CPD very well, to closely follow up and give support to the teacher in every step of the process.

The teachers have argued that if there was someone who cares about the program, the program could have been started on September 2013, which is the beginning of the academic year as it was planned, instead of January 2013. These could all imply that the follow up and the professional support system to the CPD program in the school are at least unsatisfactory to the teachers who are supposed to be the primary beneficiaries. This looks against the international best experiences which indicate that school leaders should take part in the CPD

program as both learners and facilitators (Eston, 2004; Nieto, 2009). This could also indicate the fact that teachers are not getting the proper professional support when they needed the most during CPD, particularly in their struggle to change their practices during implementation (Christie, Harley, & Penny, 2004; Gulamhussein, 2013).

Another aspect of the CPD structure in the school is whether or not the school allocates appropriate time and place for its CPD program. The school has allocated two hours weekly for CPD program so that each teacher will be able to have a 60 hour CPD activity annually. Every teacher is expected to meet within the CPD group and do the professional development activity every week for two hours. But teachers themselves are supposed to arrange the time and place for their meeting. There is no time off from their teaching assignment for the purpose of the CPD meeting and sometimes they are forced to come out of working hours. A teacher has complained that:

> …the CPD program should not be conducted out of the working hours as every teacher in this school is engaged in part time job in his/her extra time….

With regard to space, there is no as such an arranged place for holding the CPD meeting.
It is observed that some teachers meet at the lounge and others meet in their offices and still some others meet under the trees for their CPD.

Teachers have also claimed an incentive for the work they are doing in the CPD program. They have said that they have not got any incentive for their participation in the CPD program so far. As a result, they said, they are not motivated to actively participate in the program. A teacher has affirmed this saying:

> … the school based CPD has been started eight years ago, however, there is no single teacher who has got promotion or any benefit because of his/her participation in CPD.

They do not even have refreshment during their meeting for two hours a week. During the focus group discussion, one participant said:

> if we are expected to sit for two hours a week and for 120 hours a year, at least tea and coffee should have been served.

Another participant has highlighted the need to consider compensating the time they spend for the extra time they spend for CPD. He said that;

> …every teacher wants his/her children to go to good school and get good education so that they will be competent and successful in the future. As a result most of the teachers take second part time job in their free time in order to generate income to cover the school fee and related costs. Given this situation, if we are going to use our extra time for CPD, the government should pay compensation.

The participants of the focus group discussion strongly argue that unless the program takes this situation into consideration, it is unlikely that the teachers could voluntarily participate in the CPD programs.

Generally, even if there is a mandatory CPD policy and structure at the school level, it looks like that the teachers who are the main beneficiaries of the program do not find the actual context motivating and supportive. Although the design is also in the form that sustains throughout the year, there are problems like lack of incentives, lack of appropriate place and time, and lack of professional support which could cause dissatisfaction for teachers in the school CPD context.

Relationship between CPD and school improvement programs

The interview result shows that the school based CPD is designed by first identifying CPD needs of teachers. According to the CPD guideline, these needs can be school based or individual teacher's needs based. Regarding this, the CPD facilitator explains the process as follows:

> At the beginning of the year, we collect CPD needs from all the teachers of the school. These needs are listed down and prioritized. The CPD committee that I chair selects the first three needs for the given year. Accordingly, each and every teacher prepares his or her own annual CPD plan.

Both the school director and supervisor have confirmed the response of the CPD facilitator. This shows that the school CPD plan mainly relates to the immediate needs of the teachers. Although the school has a three year long-term school improvement plan, none of the respondents have mentioned the plan as a basis for the identification of the CPD needs.

The CPD framework and toolkit do not also exhaustively articulate the need to link CPD with the school improvement plan. Although the guideline states that CPD should be linked to the school improvement program of the school, the procedures that are indicated in the guideline do not clearly show how schools should actually implement it. It does not advise schools to consult their long term school improvement plans in deriving their CPD needs and priorities. It rather suggests schools to consult students, teachers, parents and the local community for their views about what should be the CPD priorities of the school each year. From the above data one can then see that the school has translated these suggestions into a form of asking these stakeholders to list down school related problems and choosing the first three problems as CPD priorities of the year.

However, the literature shows that professional development is more effective when schools approach it not in isolation but rather as a coherent part of a school reform (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). In order to avoid disparities between what teachers learn in professional development work and what they actually implement in their classrooms,

schools seamlessly link curriculum, assessment, standards, and professional learning opportunities. In the case of the target school, even if the school has got a school improvement plan, there is no indication that this plan is being consulted during the design of the CPD program.

Selection of CPD Contents

CPD contents or topics are those areas of study that the teachers need to learn in order to improve students' achievement. As one can see from the table below, the priorities identified by the schools look generic and broad. The teachers also mentioned that most of the priorities are in one way or the other similar to what they had in the previous years. The CPD priorities of the school for the year 2013/14 were professional ethics and student counseling, developing teachers' academic knowledge and teaching skills, and classroom management.

Table 1: CPD priorities of the school for the year 2013/14

• Professional Ethics and Student Counseling
• Developing Teachers' academic knowledge and Teaching Skills
• Classroom Management

Source: school teacher professional development plan

Regarding the content, what matters is the degree to which the activity focuses on improving and deepening teachers' content knowledge (e.g. mathematics or science) instead of focusing on generic methods of teaching (Schewille & Dembele, 2007; Gullamhussein, 2013). The reviews of best CPD practices by Darling-Hammond & Richardson (2009), in this regard, also shows that professional development that focuses on student learning and helps teachers develop pedagogical skills to teach specific kinds of content has strong positive effects on practice. However, the three priorities the school has identified above are too generic, and one can see that they are less connected to students' learning of a specific topic and the improvement of teachers' pedagogy.

The contents teachers need to learn must be directly related to students' learning. Teachers are required to question about their students' academic performance, gather data to pinpoint individual or group academic or social behavior, and use the information to modify their classroom practice. Then they should evaluate the results. At each step, "…*teachers decide what knowledge and skills (professional development) they need to be able to modify their practice*" (Easton, 2004, p. 32). However, the interview results and the document analysis show that the CPD contents at the target school are selected without a close consultation to the performances of the students. Moreover, given the absence of appropriate reference materials, professional support and modeling in the school context, there is less probability of adapting the topics by the teachers to specific subjects and specific groups of students (Gulamhussien, 2013; Brookfield, 1995; Schewille & Dembele, 2007).

Moreover, the teachers have reported that the topics that they are now working on are the same as that of the last year or before. They are repetitions; as a result, they are feeling bored discussing on them. A teacher during the focus group discussion explains this as follows:

> I did on these topics six, seven years ago and got certificate from the region education bureau. But we are now asked to repeat it … there is no value doing this …if it was related to our day to day practice we would have loved it and get engaged.

They also feel that it is an imposition. One participant explains this saying:

> the school threaten us to participate in the CPD saying that if we don't do CPD, we are not be able apply for career development … they are also using it as a criterion to select teachers for some part time jobs like invigilation, that come through the school.

In principle, the design of any CPD program should consult teachers' past experience in terms of formal training and CPD (Schwille & Dembele, 2007). This could save the school from unnecessary repetition of contents and wastage of time and resources. Systematic repetition of contents year after year with increasing depth and maintaining relevance to the teachers' daily practices and students learning could be acceptable by the teachers. These could in turn motivate the teachers to commit themselves to their own professional development and consequently help to improve students' achievement. But one can see from the expressions of the teachers that this does not look the case in this school.

The CPD framework and toolkit could be one reason for the above problems regarding the choice of CPD contents. In the framework it is stated that CPD needs are identified as individual, school, woreda, regional and national. It is further stated that schools should attempt to address the needs of all these bodies in designing and implementing their CPD programs. Neither in the CPD guideline nor in the toolkit is clearly mentioned the need to start planning the school CPD program from the analysis of actual students' achievement and their overall characteristics. The examples included in the guidelines also look misguiding the schools. They are more of generic and not clear about how they are derived from the analysis of students' achievement. Given the fact that these two resources are the sole references for schools in running their CPD programs and the demanding nature of the new school-based CPD approach, the guidelines should have been more comprehensive than they are now. From the above discussion, therefore, one can conclude that the link between the CPD contents to student learning is not seriously considered in the design and implementation of the school CPD program. Moreover, the CPD contents selected at least the given year are too generic and not related to the immediate needs of the teachers.

How engaging is the CPD process for the teachers?

The school has developed annual action plan for the CPD program. Modules are also supposed to be prepared for each CPD priority either by the CPD coordinator and/or by

individual teachers. The main approach being used in the CPD program is a kind of cooperative learning or team approach. As mentioned above, the teachers are grouped based on the kind of subject area they teach. Sometimes, they are also grouped by the grade level they teach. Every week every group is supposed to meet for two hours and discuss the progress on the three priorities set at the beginning of the year. At the end of the meeting, each teacher in the group is required to write a reflective journal on his/her learning and keep that report in his/her portfolio. A minute is also prepared for each meeting and the group leader is expected to submit it to the CPD facilitator every week. Structurally, the CPD arrangement looks engaging.

However, the practice seems quite different. Even if teachers meet every week for the CPD program, the meeting is nominal. They meet because it is a must to meet and write a report. In the words of a participant:

> …we just meet for a few minutes and report as if we have done the two hours CPD …sometimes we also copy the works of others.

As it is mentioned in the above section, the teachers feel that the topics selected for discussion are not relevant to their actual teaching. They have also revealed that discussing on these topics feels like an imposition.

The CPD facilitator also confirms the problem of teachers' reluctance to engage themselves in the program. The facilitator said:

> There is resistance from the teachers. Some teachers say CPD is not useful … some others also say whether we do CPD or not, nothing will be changed.

The supervisor also affirms the resistance of the teachers to engage themselves in the program. He said that

> Teachers do not believe in that CPD would help them improve their knowledge and teaching skills, rather they participate in the program not to miss any opportunity that may take CPD into consideration.

He also further explains his doubts about the active engagement of teachers in the program as follows:

> …all the teachers have submitted their individual annual CPD plans. We also observe some teachers having weekly meetings. However, it is very difficult to say that they are really actively participating in the program.

The literature appreciates the active participation of the teachers in their own professional development. In this regard, Feiman-Namser (2001, as cited in Schwille & Dembele, 2007) supports the role of teacher talk on their classroom practice as talk is the central vehicle for

sharing and analyzing ideas, values and practices. Through critical talk and thoughtful conversations, teachers develop and refine ways to study teaching and learning. However, according to Feiman-Namser (2001, as cited in Schwille & Dembele, 2007), the kind of conversation that promotes teacher learning differs from usual modes of teacher talk which feature personal anecdotes and opinions and are governed by norms of politeness and consensus.

In the light of this overview, although teachers at the target Secondary and Preparatory school meet every week at least briefly, they don't feel that they are really gaining something out of the discussion. Rather they seem to do it to fulfill their administrative responsibilities. One of the reasons for this situation could be the lack of a kind of discussion protocol that could guide their conversation in such a way that everyone in the group would benefit out of it (Easton, 2004). Unless their discussions are rich in descriptions of practice, give attention to evidence and help to examine alternative interpretations and possibilities, it is likely that their meeting would become routine. The interview result indicates the existence of this kind of situation in the target school. Teachers say that they meet for the sake of meeting and there is no rule that could guide the discussion. One participant also mentioned this about the facilitators: "…the facilitator of the group is also just one of us, no difference."

In response to the question about whether or not the teachers in each group observe each other while teaching, the CPD facilitator confirms that this is not happening. He said that the teachers in the school do not have the culture of inviting their colleagues to observe their teaching. However, the literature about effective CPD suggests that teachers must be engaged actively in their own CPD through observing each other and give and receive feedback to each other. In this regard, then, there is a gap in the CPD practices of teachers in the target schools.

Moreover, there seems to be a very limited choice of CPD approaches. As it is explained by all the respondents, it is only a weekly group discussion that is available for the teachers to go through. This by itself could make the practice monotonous for the teachers. Teachers must be provided with a variety of CPD methods and approaches so that they could choose the best one for the given need at a given time (Easton, 2004).

The teachers have admitted the fact that they copy the 'reflection' of other teachers and put it in their portfolio. They do that because developing portfolio is one of the criteria to be considered at the end of the academic year performance evaluation. But part of the reason for them to do this could be because of the irrelevance of the topics in terms of the priorities they set pertaining to their actual teaching problems and experiences. It could also be related to their low motivation towards the program due to lack of incentives and ownership.

The literature (e.g. Bruns & Luque, 2014; Craft, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Guskey, 2000; Villegas-Reimers, 2003) strongly appreciates the active engagement of the teachers in their own professional development. It also

highlights the need to relate CPD topics and methods to the real needs and interests of the teacher. But from the above data, one can see that teachers at the target Secondary and Preparatory School look passive and very reluctant to engage themselves in the CPD program. They do not feel that the program really considers their real concerns in the teaching and learning process.

Conclusion and Implications

Conclusions

The CPD context at the target Secondary and Preparatory School lack basic arrangements. The school applies the national policy that every teacher should engage in a 60 hour CPD activities annually. There are also structural arrangements set to implement this policy. The principal, the cluster supervisor and the CPD facilitator are people who are in charge of managing the program in the school. There are CPD frameworks and toolkits to guide the school based CPD. However, the teachers are not getting the necessary professional support and follow-up from the CPD facilitator, the principals and the supervisor as envisaged in the framework. They are not happy with the time arrangement as well as the place they have for the CPD meeting. Refreshments and incentives and compensations to their commitment in the CPD program are absent. Supplementary reading materials in the area of pedagogy are also a problem in the school. The school does not collaborate with other institutions in running its CPD program as well. This implies that the CPD context in the school is not as conducive as it should be. This situation in the school may in turn cause teachers' negative attitude towards the program and affect their commitment to the program.

There is a consensus that CPD and school improvement program should be integrated. However, in the case of the target school, there is no clear link between the CPD program and the school improvement program. None of the data shows that the CPD priorities are derived from the school priorities as outlined in the school improvement plan. They are simply identified on the basis of prioritizing the immediate problems listed down by the teachers in the school. The CPD guidelines and CPD toolkit contribute for the problem in this regard. This could indicate the fact that the people who are responsible in designing the CPD program in the school lack the awareness about the significant relationship between CPD and school improvement program in the school.

The starting point of school based CPD should be the analysis of students' achievements in different subjects and their overall performances at school level. However, none of the data shows that the analysis of student data have been used as the basis for designing the school based CPD program. The three CPD topics identified by the school are generic and broad. None of them are related to the specific nature of the subjects each teacher teaches in the school. Teachers also complained that the CPD topics identified by the school are repetitions of the past years and not relevant to their current situation. The absence of strong link between CPD and teachers' day-to-day practice and students' performance could lead to

teachers' loss of trust in CPD. This is counterproductive to the efforts that the government as well as the schools is exerting in promoting CPD as a major tool for quality improvement.

In principle the CPD program must be engaging for the teachers. It should give the chance for the teachers to try out new ideas into their classrooms and reflect back on it with their colleagues. The CPD practices at the target Secondary and Preparatory school, however, lack the major intent of teachers' engagement. The teachers who are arranged in different CPD groups are supposed to meet weekly and engage themselves in critical conversations. However, the actual practice is simply nominal. They meet every week briefly just for the sake of fulfilling the requirement by the school. There is no explicit protocol that guides their conversation. All the data sources have shown that there is almost nothing they take to their classroom from their conversation. There is no culture of conducting classroom observation and giving and receiving feedback among the teachers. As a result, the teachers cannot see the relevance of the CPD program for the improvement of their teaching. In general, they are so reluctant to engage themselves into the school CPD program. This situation in the school is against the principle that teachers should be active participants in every step of their professional development activities.

The data shows that there is a problem of ownership and proper orientation about the CPD program in the school. The teachers have not owned the program. They feel that it is imposed upon them by external others. They also claim that the program has no owner. Absence of appropriate orientation for all those who are involved in the management of the school based CPD is evident from the data. Those who are supposed to engage in the management of the CPD program in the school have attended only a one or two day orientation training on the topic. Moreover, visible collaboration between the school and higher education institutions, that could help to fill this gap in running the program, is also absent.

At least in the eyes of the teachers and others who are involved in the program, the impact of the program on the teaching and learning process in the school so far is nil. The teachers consider participating in the program as wastage of time. This situation is paradoxical given the fact that CPD has been introduced to the education system in Ethiopia with the ultimate purpose of improving the quality of education in the country through changing the actual practices of teachers in the classroom. This necessitates the need to question the way we manage the introduction of educational innovations like school based CPD into our school system and the extent to which our schools have the capacity to properly run school based CPD.

Implications

CPD is expected to foster meaningful change in the classroom. When it fails, not only we waste valuable time and resources, but also we lose our teacher's trust that time engaged in professional development is well spent (Chappuis, et al. 2009). This looks what has happened in the case of the target Secondary and Preparatory School. Hence, a lot has to be done in

order to reverse the unfavorable consequence of the CPD practices in the school so far. In this regard, the following issues need to be considered.

Intensive capacity development: provision of appropriate training to all the people who are engaged in running the CPD program at school level and developing their capacity of providing appropriate professional support to the teachers should be a priority. Given the innovative nature of the school based CPD program to our schools, the school leaders should also be well equipped with all the necessary skills in change management.

Conducive school context: although there is a clear CPD policy in the school, there needs to be an appropriate context for its implementation. School leaders should promote the culture of collaborative learning on a continuous basis through the actual engagement of themselves in the process. There also needs to be a supportive culture in the school. The school needs to consider the situation of teachers in terms of their socio-economic status and professional demand. If the teachers are engaged in a second job out of working hours, the CPD program should consider that in setting up the time. Moreover, there is a need for compensation if teachers are to use their spare time for CPD activities. Necessary resources to run the CPD program including reference materials should also be available in the school.

Partnership with institutions: establishing partnership between higher education institutions would help to alleviate the problem of the lack of expertise in the schools in the area of teacher learning and in the facilitation of CPD. Researchers from universities may collaborate with CPD leaders in the school on on-going basis so that both parties will eventually benefit. For instance, the school can collaborate with Bahir Dar University and get the necessary expertise support from staff in the university while at the same time serving as an apprenticeship cite for trainees of the university.

Teacher Ownership: CPD should be owned by the school community. The community must believe that CPD is integral to the work of teaching and it is a way of dealing with the complex and dynamic nature of student learning from time to time. School principals and supervisors should give teachers the room to engage themselves in the CPD process in a more flexible way.

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The Ethiopian Higher Education Equity Policy and its Flaws

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Abstract: This paper seeks to examine and understand the Ethiopian higher education equity policy issues. It is document-based research using different policy and research documents and reports as primary and secondary sources of data. The basis for the analysis is laid down through the review of a range of literature in the area of equity in general and equity in higher education in particular. The analysis of this study reveals that although there are some strong political and legal bases, as well as policy provisions, the issue of equity in higher education in Ethiopia is addressed in a fragmented and insufficient way. The equity policies are found to be inadequate in terms of the equity groups identified and the equity measures prescribed. Moreover, some of the equity measures suggested appear to be ambiguous and short-sighted. The paper finally suggests the need to re-conceptualize the issues of equity in Ethiopian higher education policies in order to lay a comprehensive foundation to recognize the equity groups adequately, as well as to identify appropriate and sufficient equity measures.

Background

The Ethiopian higher education has been under continuous reforms since the fall of the socialist government (Yizengaw, 2007). The reforms generally aim at addressing problems related to access, equity, quality and relevance, and efficiency among others. These areas are identified based on studies conducted by the government of Ethiopia and World Bank researchers. In these studies the Ethiopian higher education is generally characterized as very limited in access, inequitable, poor in quality of teaching, weak in research output, underfunded, having very limited autonomy, a very low level of experienced and qualified teaching staff, and inflexible (Saint 2004; World Bank, 2003; Yizengaw, 2007).

Equity is a persistent policy issue in higher education. Equity, as a policy issue, focuses on ensuring social justice and social inclusion in a society (Martin, 2010). In its 1998 World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO made a major international call for equity of access to higher education (UNESCO, 1998). A decade later, in 2008, OECD came up with a broader concept of equity, which goes beyond access. According to OECD (2008), equity refers to having a system with equitable "access to, participation in, and outcomes of higher education based only on the individual's innate ability and study effort" (OECD, 2008:14).

OECD (2008) also argues that an equitable higher education system recognizes that individuals' potential at tertiary level is not related to social and personal circumstances such as socio-economic status, gender, place of residence, ethnicity, age or disability. These and other international policy initiatives have firmly planted the issue of equity among the major policy issues at global level (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2010; Martin, 2010). However, for various historical, cultural, economic and political reasons greater inequality among various groups has been and is characterizing the Ethiopian higher education (Saint, 2004; Teferra and Altbach, 2004).

The purpose of this paper is, hence, to examine the policy framework for equity issues in the Ethiopian higher education system. The paper reviews the recent development of the concept of equity in higher education. The related policy provisions are, therefore, analyzed based on the literature reviewed. The analysis focuses on what are provided as equity related policies in the Ethiopian context. It specifically attempts to examine the equity groups identified and the measures provided to ensure equity concerns in the Ethiopian higher education.

The first section of this paper presents the concept of equity in higher education by further elaborating equity groups and major equity measures. The next section discusses how the concept of equity is reflected in different Ethiopian higher education policy documents. Finally, the paper presents some conclusions and policy implications.

Equity Issues in Higher Education

The concern of making social, economic and political services, benefits and achievements fair and just, in terms of access, participation and outcomes, for all individuals and groups of a society is related to the concept of social justice and human rights. These concerns are expressed in terms of social policies by being the guiding ideas underlying, inter alia, welfare, education, and health policies (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007).

The last couple of decades have witnessed unprecedented expansion of higher education throughout the world. Clancy and Goastellec (2007) report that by the year 2000 the number of tertiary students had grown to 100 million, and the World Bank (2000) predicts that the number will rise to 150 million by 2025 globally. In connection with such massive expansion, the gross enrolment of the age cohort for higher education has risen significantly. According to Altbach, et al. (2010, p. Vi), the percentage of the age cohort enrolled in tertiary education has grown from 19% in 2000 to 26% in 2007, with the most dramatic gains in upper middle and upper income countries. This massive expansion has been driven mainly by "economic priorities linked to technological change, globalization and increased international competition" (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007, p. 137).

The demographic change in higher education has indeed the potential in benefiting more people as it facilitates the move from traditionally elite based higher education to mass higher education. However, the massive expansion observed over the last several decades, despite

many policy initiatives, has not benefited all sectors of society equally (Altbach, et al., 2010). Even at times of expansion and increased access, admission to higher education is preserved to academically selected students on the basis of merit, which basically favours those from certain kinds of social groups or categories (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007). Clancy and Goastellec (2007) further argue "…when access is massified, inequalities are reproduced within the higher education structure" (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007, p. 138). Such concerns are reiterated within various international conventions, and have thus made the issue of equity in higher education a major policy concern, even at times of massive expansion.

Inequality in higher education is both a problem in itself, as deprivation of basic rights, as well as a problem that reproduces further inequalities in a society. Inequality as a problem per se can be explained by referring to the basic human right issues in access to education and the right to be equally treated in the social system. On the other hand, the potential of higher education to open wider social, economic, and political opportunities to individuals makes it a source of further inequalities. Supporting this idea Anderson argues "the more education one has, the better able one is to compete for coveted positions at selective colleges and, in turn, for better-paying, more prestigious, and intrinsically rewarding careers" [emphasis added] (2006, p. 616). Based on similar premises Altbach, et al. (2010, p. 39) suggest that "…providing equal access to higher education means overcoming the social and economic inequities within each nation and the corresponding disparities that result".

The argument for equal access to higher education was emphasized repeatedly in the declarations that emerged as result of the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education. UNESCO by fully subscribing Article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "Everyone has the right to education . . . higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit" (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). The UNESCO conference in 1998, thus, reaffirms the right to equitable access through its Art. 3(a) which states "… no discrimination can be accepted in granting access to higher education on grounds of race, gender, language or religion, or economic, cultural or social distinctions, or physical disabilities" (UNESCO, 1998).

However, this famous declaration by UNESCO, emphasizes equality of rights in access based only on merit. Merit, while it can be attributed to various factors, is taken as a decisive criterion to enjoy the right to access. Moreover, this declaration is not binding to the signatories and is expected to be materialized according to the goodwill of respective governments. This does not give a clear and strong basis for the realization of the declaration, for example, when governments have other priorities.

In this line of argument, both in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and UNSECO's declaration, absolute dependence on merit, is challenged by various researchers. Merit based access to higher education, regardless of its strong justification, has been mentioned as a source of continued reproduction of inequalities in higher education. Clancy and Goastellec (2007) strongly argue that merit based access to higher education strongly favours those who already are advantageous and possess "… principally the good fortune of being born within

certain favoured social groups or categories" (p. 138). They further describe the current massive expansion as a cause for reproducing inequalities in a society. McCowan (2007) also argues:

> Meritocratic admissions procedures without formal discrimination have been the norm since the 1960s but many groups are still heavily underrepresented. Performance on entry examinations is of course dependent not only on ability and effort, but also on the quality of previous schooling, which is normally dependent on these background factors. So an equitable entry system would make some adjustments for these factors, in some cases leading to positive discrimination for certain groups (p. 583).

In general, access to higher education is competitive to varying degrees depending upon context. However, it will always privilege those with superior economic, social and cultural resources or background (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007).

Such a broad understanding of the pervasive problems of inequalities in higher education has substantially attracted the attention of researchers and policymakers over the last couple of decades (Goastellec, 2010). Increasingly, the necessity to go beyond formal equality of right and take account of differences in the opportunity structure is recognized (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007; Goastellec, 2010). The opportunity structure involves pursuing equity not solely in terms of access to higher education, but also in terms of participation in and outcomes of higher education.

In this sense, there has been much development in understanding equity beyond ensuring equitable access. Goastellec (2007) in Clancy and Goastellec, (2007) mentions the recently growing concern to reconsider merit based equal access and replacing it with the "norm of equality of right" (p. 138). In the same way, OECD also came up with a broader concept of equity that goes beyond access. According to OECD (2008), equity refers to having a system with equitable "access to, participation and success in outcomes of higher education based only on the individual's innate ability and study effort" (OECD, 2008, p. 14). All these show that equity policies or initiatives have to consider broader issues, which ultimately ensure redressing the existing social injustice and inequality other than ensuring equal access.

To sum up, equity is concerned with social justice and ideals of democratization (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007). The focus on equity in higher education can be seen from two perspectives. First, it has an intrinsic value per se, taking education as a right. Second, it is also instrumental to break the cycle of social, economic and political inequalities in a society as it aims at ensuring equity in a way that helps to redress historical, social, economic and political inequalities that exist within the society.

Such understandings result in a redefinition of equity itself and ways to redress it. Among the various issues involved in dealing with equity, patterns of inequality are important, in terms of identifying the different segments of society that are underrepresented within, or excluded from, hegemonic/dominant social systems. Identifying ways to address equity related

problems is also worth reviewing. The following two sections, therefore, present the review of literature in these two areas.

Equity Groups in Higher Education

According to Martin (2010), in addition to the meaning of equity and the rationale behind it, it is important to operationally define "…who should be targeted by equity measures, or in other terms who the equity groups are" (p. 26) depending on the specific conditions of different contexts. Defining these equity groups helps to understand the historic, economic, social and political construction of inequalities, and, as a result, the corrective possibilities (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007).

Equity groups can refer to the following groups of people: women, ethnic minorities, people from low socio-economic status, people with disabilities, older people, and people from remote and rural areas (Altbach, et al., 2010; Clancy & Goastellec, 2007; Martin, 2010; Schuller, 2003). Indeed, the equity groups in each context are defined based on the specific historical, social, economic and political conditions of countries (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007). However, some of the equity groups such as gender/sex, socio-economic background, disability and age seem to be universal in many, if not all, contexts (Nussbaum, 2000; Schuller, 2003; UNESCO, 1998).

Gender or sex based inequality in higher education (Altbach, et al., 2010; Nussbaum, 2000) is a common feature of most of the higher education systems in the world to varying degrees. Specifically, regardless of various policy initiatives, women globally (except in some developed countries) are underrepresented in higher education. Women's under-representation is more severe in graduate and post graduate fields and in some fields of study such as science and technology (OECD, 2008).

The socio-economic background of students is another major source of equity divisions. Students who are from the middle and higher socio-economic classes have the advantage of getting better basic education and are relatively far better prepared for higher education than those from the lower classes (Altbach, et al., 2010; Clancy & Goastellec, 2007; OECD, 2008). However, defining who is from the higher and who is from the lower socio-economic classes remains difficult in many countries and data are very limited. With limited data it is also indicated that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are exposed to different challenges after they join higher education (OECD, 2008).

People with disabilities are among the groups of society who are underrepresented in higher education despite current improvements as a result of higher education expansion (Altbach, et al., 2010; OECD, 2008). Systemic and cultural exclusion of people with disabilities from/in earlier education and lack of proper support make them less prepared for, and as result, underrepresented in higher education (OECD, 2008; UNESCO, 2003).

Age is another area of inequality that has been observed in many countries (Altbach, et al., 2010; OECD, 2008; Schuller, 2003). Schuller (2003) argues for a more age inclusive approach to education at all levels, including higher education, which leads the overall educational policy framework towards the visions of lifelong learning (p. 143).

In addition to the above equity groups, there are various groups, which equity initiatives need to address depending on specific situations. Ethnicity, urban-rural division, race, religion and other factors can characterize those specific country situations as they are "idiosyncratic of nations, …that make sense in the context of national history" (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007, p. 139).

However, it is important to notice that these equity groups are not mutually exclusive and represent various portions of society. As individuals can be identified by different social groups the division is rather complex and interconnected (Altbach, et al., 2010; Clancy & Goastellec, 2007; Martin, 2010; Schuller, 2003). As Martin (2010, p. 27) states "…multiple equity concerns are frequently correlated and thus exacerbate disadvantage". This entails the need to carefully analyse and be aware of the complex nature of equity groups.

Equity Strategies for/in Higher Education

The need to promote social justice and democratization of higher education has resulted in various policy initiatives to confront the historical and contemporary inequalities in higher education. Moreover, such policies aim at using higher education as a means to curb socio-economic inequalities in a society through equitable higher education (Altbach, et al., 2010; Clancy & Goastellec, 2007; Martin, 2010; OECD, 2008). Altbach, et al. (2010) mention such policies as strategies to rectify past wrongs which in one way or another affect individuals' competitiveness, where access to and success in higher education is competitive. The policies and strategies, however, are different in different countries depending on the nature of equity groups and the overall context (Martin, 2010). These policy initiatives include expanding and diversifying higher education, establishing special institutions for target groups, cost and finance related issues, pedagogical innovation and improving internal institutional conditions among others. Affirmative action, however, is the most widely employed strategy to improve the participation of underserved social groups in higher education (Altbach, et al., 2010; Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2005; Martin, 2010; OECD, 2008).

Expansion and diversification (different mode of delivery like distance education, flexible curricula and so on), according to Martin (2010), has proved to be a means to improve the opportunity to a more diverse student population. However, as mentioned earlier, access is still to a great extent, competitive in many parts of the world. This in turn makes the massive expansion another way of reproducing inequalities where the well prepared and advantageous social groups can maximize their opportunities. Hence, although expansion and diversification is a vital condition to solve equality related problems by raising the number of available seats, it is not sufficient to address the problem.

In order to address inequalities, which are due to financial problems, some countries design cost/finance related interventions. According to Altbach, et al. (2010) such policies mainly help students with a low socio-economic background. Different kinds of loan schemes have shown success in increasing access. However, fear of debt tends to be a greater limit for students from poorer backgrounds, since there is less financial "backup" in the case of underemployment after graduation (a common condition in the developing world (Altbach, et al., 2010).

On the other hand, as most students from underprivileged groups are not economically able to afford even their basic needs (food, housing, transportation, stationary etc), they require financial support, if they are to be sustained in the system (Altbach, et al., 2010; Bloom, et al., 2005; OECD, 2008). In order to tackle this problem and encourage them to come to higher education, some countries put in place programmes through which they provide financial support for these students.

Affirmative action, as discussed in the previous section, is a widely used strategy to confront and improve the prevalent inequalities in higher education (Altbach, et al., 2010; Clancy & Goastellec, 2007; Martin, 2010; OECD, 2008). Affirmative action programmes are used to repair past discrimination. They represent 'positive discrimination' or 'reverse discrimination'. Programmes labelled 'affirmative action' generally give priority to groups once discriminated against or underrepresented in contrast to other social groups identified as privileged groups (Altbach, et al., 2010; Martin, 2010).

Affirmative action is a means to "…redress the effects of past and current disadvantage and to encourage institutions to provide special treatment in terms of access and study support" (Martin, 2010, p. 28). Such redressing involves different measures in different countries based on context. Affirmative action programmes may involve numerical quotas, accepting students with lower scores of national tests or entrance exams (Altbach, et al., 2010; Bloom, et al., 2005; Martin, 2010).

Affirmative action related initiatives, nevertheless, have been controversial and faced resistance mainly from the non-beneficiaries of such initiatives and those who claim to have concern over quality (Altbach, et al., 2010; Martin, 2010). In summarizing the different critics of the opponents of affirmative action initiatives as well as over expectations towards them, Plous (2003) states what he thinks are 'myths about affirmative action'. Some of these myths related to the present discussion include that affirmative action is a way of curing discrimination with discrimination; that it undermines the self-esteem of beneficiaries and that it favours unqualified candidates over the qualified ones. All these according to Plous (2003) are misunderstandings about affirmative action programme objectives.

It can be argued here that these and other arguments against affirmative action seem to be strongly related to so-called "meritocratic" thoughts. Merit based competition, as mentioned earlier, can only be effective under ideal conditions where all competitors have comparable

previous opportunities and privileges, which otherwise benefit only those who are privileged by virtue of being male, from middle class and urban areas (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007).

The above strategies mainly focus on improving access to higher education to the underserved groups of a society. However, the issue of equity has recently developed to ensure equitable participation and success in higher education in addition to equity in access (Altbach, et al., 2010; OECD, 2008). Altbach, et al. (2010) indicate that those students who join higher education through affirmative action programmes constitute a higher proportion of dropouts and need due consideration to ensure their success so that they can meaningfully benefit from the programmes. Taking this into account OECD (2008, p. 66) asserts:

> …gaining access to tertiary education does not guarantee the successful completion of a degree programme. In a number of countries, while progress was achieved in relation to the participation rates of some under-represented groups, success and retention rates for those groups often remained disappointing. There is considerably less knowledge about the obstacles that disadvantaged students encounter to succeed in tertiary education than about the obstacles they encounter prior to accessing tertiary education. In most countries, greater emphasis needs to be placed on equity of outcomes with policies more targeted at ensuring the success of students from under-represented groups. This would translate into more emphasis being placed on student progression throughout studies with special support and follow-up measures to assist those students at risk of failure.

Improving the internal physical and academic facilities of higher education institutions to serve the special needs of students with disabilities, as well as pedagogical interventions are among the areas that are indicated to ensure equitable participation and success of students for the underserved groups of a society (Altbach, et al., 2010; OECD, 2008).

Pedagogical intervention refers to designing and implementing pedagogical approaches that consider the needs and conditions of students who join higher education through affirmative action rather than one-size-fits all approach. This seems more relevant given that not only access is competitive but participation and success also are (Hodkinson & Deverokonda, 2009).

As part of long-term solutions, OECD (2008) emphasizes the need to strengthen and expand primary and secondary education equitably. OECD's argument on earlier intervention is based on the assumption that when there is more inclusive, equitable quality education at an earlier stage, there is a greater chance of seeing an emergence of inclusive set of students who are ready to join higher education. This seems a very comprehensive policy intervention but does not seem helpful when addressing the problems of those who are already through the school system and aspire to enjoy the benefits of higher education.

The need to make higher education equitable in general, redressing historical, cultural, economic and systemic inequalities in particular, is the impetus for equity related higher

education policies. The need for such policies is justified as a human right and social justice issue. Accordingly, different policy initiatives to redress these problems have been designed and implemented in different higher education systems. The following section examines the policy initiatives of the Ethiopian higher education system to redress problems of equity.

Higher Education Equity Policy Provisions in Ethiopia

Considering the education sector as a priority for ensuring poverty reduction and sustainable development, the government of Ethiopia introduced the current Education and Training Policy in 1994 (FDRE, 1994). The policy in general identifies limited access, inequitable distribution of educational opportunities, problems of efficiency, lack of quality and relevance, and undemocratic contents as major problems at all levels of education (FDRE, 1994; MoE, 2002). Following the adoption of this policy, higher education has experienced various reforms based on the problems identified in the policy as well as subsequent studies by the government, the World Bank and individual researchers (Saint, 2004; World Bank, 2003; Yizengaw, 2007).

The then Vice-Minister for higher education, Teshome Yizengaw, explains that higher education policies and strategies were designed and started to be implemented with the objective of "ensuring national development and competitiveness" (Yizengaw, 2007, p. 32). The reform was supported by the World Bank both technically and financially. The World Bank as funding partner and active actor of the higher education reform in Ethiopia forwarded its own recommendations to the Ethiopian higher education sector in 2003. These recommendations, in general, consist of administrative and financial autonomy of institutions, involvement of the private sector in higher education provision, introduction of cost sharing in the form of graduate tax and so on to the Ethiopian higher education (FDRE, 2003).

Following these new developments, the higher education sector has enjoyed remarkable achievements particularly in terms of expansion and diversification. This expansion according to Yizengaw (2007, p. 32) took place after 1997 "in an unprecedented pace and diversification." To mention some quantitative data that may show the expansion of higher education, the number of public universities increased from two in 1998 to 33 in 2013 and they are expected to grow to 45 in the coming academic years. With respect to the private sector, more than 50 higher education institutions were accredited before the end of 2008/09. Thus, overall enrolments, which stood at less than three thousand in 1994, increased to 553,848, by 2012/13. Of these, 79, 650 enrolments were in non-government institutions and this accounts for 14.4% of the total enrolment. Consequently, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for higher education increased from 3.6% in 1999 to 5.7 % in 2012/2013. This means that the Ethiopian higher education now has come close to the African average in GER of 6% in 2000 (MoE, 2005, 2010, 2013; Negash, 1996; Yizengaw, 2007).

This paper presents the analysis of Ethiopia's higher education equity policy. However, it seems worth mentioning here that this analysis is challenged by the lack of a very detailed,

full-fledged equity focused policy. Therefore, the analysis relies upon what is mentioned in different publications by the government, such as higher education proclamations and general educational strategic plans. It is also complemented by information from secondary sources, such as various studies made in the area of Ethiopian higher education. The first section of the analysis focuses on examining different official publications of the government that relate to equity and this is followed by a critical examination of the equity strategies and their implications.

Equity Policy and Its Targets

As discussed in the preceding sections, access to higher education in Ethiopia has been one of the lowest in the world for several decades ever since its naissance. However, this picture has started to change over the last decade or so. Specifically, the higher education gross enrolment rate in Ethiopia is soaring unprecedentedly. However, at a time of such massive expansion, inequality in higher education remains a problem among the different groups of society (Saint, 2004; World Bank, 2003; Yizengaw, 2007). This has made the need to address equity related problems in higher education as major policy concerns.

Equity is among the major social, political and economic concerns which get political and legal attention in Ethiopia. These political and legal considerations are well reflected in the current constitution as well as in the incumbent ruling party's (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF,) programme. In its programme, the ruling party defines the issue of (in) equality mainly based on two different social groups: regions (created mainly based on ethno-lingual criteria) and gender. The issue of regional equality is at the centre of the political agenda of the ruling party in Ethiopia (EPRDF, 2005; FDRE, 1995). Gender inequality has also similar political and legal attention in which women in general are identified as a disadvantaged group in the economic, social and political system of the country. The following excerpts show what the ruling political party sought as a political programme (EPRDF, 2005):

> To ensure equality of rights and opportunities among regions so that they can achieve the optimal growth possible. …. To ensure that special capacity-building support is extended to regions disadvantaged in implementation capacity (EPRDF, 2005, Article 9.2).

> Fighting for participation on equal footing of women in political, economic and social affairs while savouring equally the benefits of economic growth (EPRDF, 2005, Article 15.5).

The political programme shows the presence of political willingness to ensure equity among what have been identified as equity groups: regions and gender. Similarly, the Republic's constitution presents the following two provisions, which take equality as a basic

constitutional right. It is stated in the Constitution that "Every Ethiopian national has the right to equal access to publicly funded social services" (FDRE, 1995, Article 41(3)).

In a more particular issue, that of gender inequality, the constitution states the need to provide affirmative action that ensures women's equality as:

> "The historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia taken into account, women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative action. The purpose of such measures shall be to provide special attention to women so as to enable them to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions"(FDRE, 1995 Article 35(3))

The aforementioned articles from the party´s programme as well as the Constitution indicate the existence of political interest as well as legal bases to address problems related to inequality. This shows that equity related measures are politically recognized as legal rights of marginalized citizens. It is also worth mentioning that the State has a constitutional obligation to provide the necessary resources to ensure equality in all social services including education.

Based on these political and legal premises, further specific equity policies are formulated and put in place in various sectors including education. The Education and Training Policy depicts its concern over the issue of equity at all levels of education. It states that "Special attention will be given to women and to those students who did not get educational opportunities in preparation, distribution and use of educational support input" (FDRE, 1994; Article 3.7.7). The provisions of the Education and Training Policy are further translated and adapted to the different levels of education, including higher education. Accordingly, the Higher Education Proclamation calls for the sector to ensure equitable distribution among the regions. Further, it seeks to ensure equitable participation of girls, students from less developed regions and students with disabilities. The Proclamations states, "higher education shall have the objectives to…provide equitable distribution of higher education institutions" (FDRE, 2003, Article 4(9), FDRE, 2009 Article 4(9)). Although the revised Proclamation does not explicitly address equity concerns, other than in regional terms, the higher education proclamation 351/2003 endorses affirmative action in admission procedures as an equity measure. The latter policy approach of affirmative action seeks to ensure equitable access and support for women, students with disabilities and those from the less developed regions. The higher education proclamation states that:

> "Entry assessment or admission procedures designed for any female, disabled student, a student who has completed high school education in a developing region and who is native of the nationality of such region or a student from the nationality whose participation in higher education is low shall be different from others. They, shall,

during their stay in the institution, get special support; particulars of such a support shall be determined by the Ministry[3]". (2003, Article 33(1)).

The revised Proclamation also includes provisions for higher education institutions to adapt their physical and academic environment to the special needs of students with disabilities as well as in admission policies for adult learners, as will be discussed later in this section.

These policies can evidently be of great use in addressing some aspects of equity related problems in higher education. According to some studies, there is greater disparity in higher education participation among students from different regions (Wondemu, 2004). The World Bank has also identified these regional imbalances as issues that require governmental priority while expanding higher education. The Bank suggests political instability to be a potential implication of failing to do so. It argues that "If these [regional] inequities are left unattended, the seeds of political instability might begin to germinate over the longer term" (World Bank, 2003, p. 14).

Similarly, identifying women's underrepresentation and historical exclusion from social, economic and political developments seems to get due attention in the legal and policy documents quoted above. All research in the area vividly indicate, regardless of recent developments, the significant gender disparity in higher education participation and completion (MoE, 2002, 2010; Saint, 2004; Wondemu, 2004; World Bank, 2003; Yizengaw, 2007). These findings indeed make it clear that there needs to be policies that address both regional and gender disparity. The revised Higher Education Proclamation has also clearly indicated the need to consider students with special needs in higher education (FDRE, 2009).

However, identifying only these three groups (region, gender and disability) can be critiqued for inadequately addressing the multifaceted inequality problems in Ethiopia. Apart from regional and gender disparity, studies by the World Bank (Saint, 2004; Yizengaw, 2007) uncover significant inequality in higher education participation based on other variables such as economic class. The World Bank, for instance, reveals that in 1999 "71% of tertiary students come from households in the top income quintile" (2003, p. 14). In addition to disparities based on socioeconomic classes, age is not included as an important equity group in policy statements. Having explored/outlined a history of limited educational accessibility in Ethiopia until recently, it is evident that a significant number of citizens have been denied access to higher education after completing secondary school. These citizens are now adult members of the society who need to be taken into consideration by all kinds of equity-related policies. Failing to do so does nothing but sustain their exclusion from higher education (Schuller, 2003). These two examples indicate how narrowly equity groups are defined or some important equity groups are missed out entirely or understated in the policy documents. Moreover, even the way regions are defined as important equity groups in the Proclamation, is ambiguous and perhaps misleading. The study by the World Bank (2003) explains the

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[3] Ministry of Education

geographical disparity in a more sensible way by showing that the regional difference are more visible between urban and rural areas, where the urban areas of relatively developed regions seem to be more advantaged. This explanation is sensible, given that it is likely that people from urban areas have a better chance to access higher education than the majority of rural people from the so-called developed regions. Therefore, the gross region/ethnic based definition of equity groups is ambiguous in its definition and perhaps misleading, as it may lead to favour the already advantaged groups of a society, like those from big cities of the so-called underdeveloped regions.

Based on the forgoing discussions it is evident that equity as a social policy issue in general and as a higher education policy issue in particular has both political attention and legal bases. The political interest, however, seems to go beyond laying the ground to significantly influence the way the equity issue is defined in higher education in Ethiopia. Particularly, defining regions as equity groups reflects the current ethnic/region based political orientation in the country. This, in turn, ensures equitable social and economic developments among the region as a major political agenda. The same influence seems to be reflected in policies meant to address higher education inequalities in Ethiopia.

Equity Strategy, Challenges and Consequences

In order to address the inequalities in Ethiopia's higher education as well as to make the sector more just, the Ethiopian government has put different strategies in place. These strategies mainly focus on expanding and diversifying higher education and affirmative action during admission (FDRE, 2003, 2009; MoE, 2002; Yizengaw, 2007). This section examines these strategies and their implications in the higher education sector in general.

Limited access has been identified as a major source of inequalities observed in Ethiopian higher education as the previous elitist system only favoured those who were highly competitive (MoE, 2002; Yizengaw, 2007). As it is well argued in the previous sections, merit based competiveness is not always necessarily fair (Sen, 1992, 2009; Sobrinho, 2008). Based on the same premises, the government is determined to address equity issues mainly through expanding the sector so that more students from all groups of society would have better access to higher education(MoE, 2002; Yizengaw, 2007). The expansion of higher education is facilitated by the government's commitment to increase the intake capacity of existing institutions and to establish new public universities, the participation of private providers, and expansion of alternative provisions, such as distance education (Saint, 2004; Teshome, 2009; Yizengaw, 2007).

Expanding higher education certainly results in an increment in the total number of students, which will in turn help to increase the number of students from even historically underrepresented groups. For example, the total number of female students in Ethiopian higher education increased from 7,282 in the academic year 1995/96 to 553,848 by the academic year 2012/13 (MoE, 2013; Yizengaw, 2007). However, as the issue of equity is basically based on analysis of the relative participation of different social groups, the

participation pattern indicates further inequalities regardless of the quantitative gains. In this line of analysis, the share of female students grows only to 30.0 % from 20.8% over the same period (MoE, 2013; Yizengaw, 2007). This shows that although expansion can create more space in the higher education institutions to accept more diverse students, the share of female students remains significantly low. In other words, unless mechanisms to redress and control inequalities among the different social groups are in place, the contribution of expanding and diversifying higher education will do little to address equity issues.

Moreover, expansion is conceptualized as the means to ensure equity among the different federal states/regions of Ethiopia. The Higher Education Proclamation identifies the need to ensure equitable distribution of public universities among the regions of the country (FDRE, 2003, 2009). This leads to one of the most prevalent phenomena of today's higher education in Ethiopia- the mushrooming of new public higher education institutions in different regions of the country (MoE, 2010; Teshome, 2009; Yizengaw, 2007). In addition to the existing thirty two public universities, Ethiopia is establishing eleven new ones in different regions with the objectives of having one university to two million population and ensuring equitable distribution of higher education institutions among regions and improving the intake capacities of its higher education sector.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that such expansions may play a very small role in improving the actual equity of students from the underrepresented groups of society. This is not by disregarding the various contributions higher education institutions can play by their presence in different parts of the country. They, in fact, play different important roles for the social and economic development of the regions where they are located through research and services. However, the institutions' location plays a very limited role in guaranteeing that local students have better advantages, since admission and placement to higher education takes place centrally by the MoE (FDRE, 2003, 2009). The Ministry decides the cutting point for admission in public and private institutions and decides the placements within public higher education institutions centrally. Students from all over the country are considered altogether for placement in each academic year. Therefore, the location of higher education institutions seems to be a less decisive factor per se in ensuring equitable participation. It appears, however, that such policy provisions are meant to address equity among the different regions in possessing public institutions. Indeed, availability does not guarantee access.

In addition, expanding higher education through private providers most likely favours only those who can afford to pay the tuition. Moreover, as these institutions are concentrated in urban areas they are more easily accessible to urban dwellers (Yizengaw, 2007). Therefore, despite their tremendous contribution in expanding higher education, the involvement of private providers, at least potentially, can aggravate the inequality by favouring only those who are economically strong and from urban areas. The issue of affordability needs to be taken into consideration in relation to distance education as well, while it is accessible to students of remote areas, it is highly dependent on the development of infrastructure.

Affirmative action is another policy initiative that is meant to redress the problems of the underrepresented groups of society in higher education and ensuring their success. The higher education proclamation 351/2003 specifically identified women, students with disabilities, and those from underdeveloped regions to have a different/lower admission points (FDRE, 2003). However, in the revised Proclamation, the groups are left undefined and the Proclamation gives the responsibility to do so to the Council of Ministers as stated below:

> "…there shall be special admissions procedures for disadvantaged citizens to be determined by regulation of the Council of Ministers and to be implemented by directive of the Ministry [of Education]…"(FDRE, 2009 Article 39.4)

The provision given to the Council of Ministers seems to be putting ambiguity in defining the equity groups in higher education as it is not yet publicly identified and communicated. This certainly opens, at least potentially, room for political manoeuvres and lack of clear accountability. In the same Proclamation, however, there is a provision that refers to admission of adult learners. It reads:

> "A public institution may admit adults under special admissions procedures to be issued pursuant to the establishment regulations of the institution and as the institution's senate may determine; and the Ministry may extend the applicability of this provision to private institutions as circumstances may permit."(FDRE, 2009, p. Article 39.35).

Although age is not identified as an equity group in many of the documents, such recent developments might indicate growing concern in the area. However, it remains to be further investigated why adult learners are identified as the ones that need special admission while other groups are left to be defined by the Council of Ministers.

The revised Proclamation, furthermore, provides details about the need for institutions to make their physical environment and academic programmes adaptable to students with disabilities. It suggests that institutions shall make facilities and their programmes 'amenable' to use by students with physical disabilities. It also states that institutions shall provide educational support materials, develop alternative testing procedures and so on (FDRE, 2009, pp. Article 40.41-44). Such policy initiatives to make the whole physical and academic environment adaptable to students with special needs plays a vital role in promoting equity in participation and success of students with disabilities in higher education.

However, based on the provision of the 351/2003 proclamation, females, students with disabilities and students from less developed regions (namely Afar, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella and Somali) are admitted to public higher education institutions by affirmative action regulations lowering the entry point for admission to higher education for these groups of students (Wondemu, 2004; Yizengaw, 2007). Some studies in this area recognize the contribution of such affirmative action during admission procedures for the identified groups in increasing their participation. Notwithstanding, some positive contribution in addressing

higher education inequalities, affirmative action procedures seem inadequate as well as insufficient to make higher education equitable. The inadequacy of the affirmative action programmes is related to the very nature of the equity policy in Ethiopia that narrowly (perhaps ambiguously) defines the equity groups that are eligible to the affirmative action procedures.

Its insufficiency is manifested as it focuses on mainly admission, in other words providing equitable access to the already identified groups of society (except the recent development with provisions for affirmative action to students with disabilities). As is discussed thoroughly in the previous sections, addressing inequalities by focusing only on provision of equitable access does very little to address overall inequality issues in higher education. In this regard, some studies reveal that a significant proportion of students who join higher education institutions through affirmative action procedures tend to fail to complete their studies (Wondemu, 2004; Yizengaw, 2007). Failing to retain and ensure the success of students who join higher education is "tantamount to denying the access to higher education" (Yizengaw, 2007, p. 71).

Poor retention and lower completion rates of students who join higher education institutions through affirmative action is a function of different factors (Wondemu, 2004; Yizengaw, 2007). It starts from their relatively inadequate preparation to fit in with the regular programmes and compete with students with relatively better preparation. Prejudice about these students from their colleagues, as well as from faculty members, has also been identified as a factor that contributes to the problem. Lack of clear institutionalized efforts to support these students during their stay in higher education institutions is another factor fuelling prejudices and sending mixed messages to students as threats to quality (Yizengaw, 2007). Such resistances have a pervasive effect on some of the challenges mentioned above. All these and other challenges faced by students who join higher education institutions as a result of affirmative action, makes it clear that an affirmative action policy that focuses only on making access equitable is insufficient.

Conclusion

This paper sought to examine and understand the Ethiopian higher education equity policy issues. Therefore, the review of literature conducted regarding higher education equity issues as a basis to analyse diverse policy provisions and research papers in order to examine in depth how the Ethiopian higher education equity policies are conceptualized and presented.

The analysis indicates that there are serious concerns over issues of equity in Ethiopian higher education. It also indicates that although the issue of equity is well acknowledged in the political rhetoric and has strong legal bases, equity issues do not seem to get due attention in higher education policies except for some fragmented indications in different documents. Moreover, it is argued that the policy on equity is ambiguous and short-sighted, with inadequate attention given to the way in which equity is defined and conceptualized.

The analysis of this study reveals the Ethiopian higher education equity policy provisions to have problems of inadequacy, ambiguity and short-sightedness both in defining the equity groups, as well as in the strategies to redress the problems. Only a few equity groups (region and gender) are taken into consideration although limited types of disability and age have appeared to some extent with recent developments. However, apart from being very limited in identifying equity groups, those identified (for example, regions) are also ambiguous. The strategies also appear to be inadequate and short-sighted. Expansion of higher education is one of the strategies provided in Ethiopia that, if not supported by other relevant policies, has the potential to reproduce inequality. It is also well argued that the expansion which, according to FDRE (1995, 2003), is provided to be equitably distributed among regions, as one equity measure plays a very small role in ensuring equitable access and participation. Moreover, expanding higher education through private providers in the Ethiopian context where socioeconomic barriers are strong (World Bank, 2003) can potentially reproduce inequalities by favouring the economically able and mostly students from the urban areas. Equity strategies that only focus on access, despite the very few and general indications on the need for affirmative action on further support, shows the extent to which the strategies are short-sighted.

Nevertheless, the analysis also shows some degree of contribution of equity strategies in addressing higher education inequality problems (through affirmative action admission policies). However, the students who join higher education institutions through affirmative action (through lower entry points) are facing various obstacles to achieve equitable participation and academic success.

These problems clearly indicate that it is very important to embrace broader concepts of equity that involve equity in access, participation and success (Martin, 2010; OECD, 2008) among the different social groups with comprehensive and adequate policy measures, if meaningful equity, and as a result, social justice is to be achieved.

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Assessment of Learning Outcomes: The Transnational Agenda, the READ Program and Ethiopian Priorities

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Abstract: In the field of comparative education, there is a growing amount of research on how education policy agendas are formed at the transnational level and how these influence policy making in individual countries. This article focuses on learning outcome assessment that has gained prominence as a transnational agenda, constructed within a network of actors sharing a common belief in the necessity of measuring learning outcomes as a key precondition for improving education quality. This agenda is clearly guiding the activities of the READ program, funded by the Russian Government and implemented by the World Bank in eight developing countries during 2008-2013. The case of Ethiopia as one of the READ countries is analysed on the basis of the READ reports and the ESDP and GEQIP documents. The analysis shows both noticeable influences that can be traced back to the transnational agenda and some policy positions that reflect national prioritization. The discussion section raises the question how standardised measurement of learning outcomes – which is becoming a global imperative through the EFA process – may become a straitjacket to teaching and learning.

Keywords: assessment, learning outcome, READ program, Ethiopia

Background

This article is an outgrowth from two strands of the author´s research: previous and ongoing analyses on assessment of learning outcomes as a transnational agenda (Piattoeva & Takala, forthcoming; http://www.uta.fi/edu/en/research/projects/evalpolitics.html), and a longstanding interest in educational development in Ethiopia (for Ethiopia as part of comparative analyses see Takala, 1998 & Takala, 2009, and as the focus of analysis Martin, Oksanen & Takala, 2000). The latter perspective has recently been deepened by his role as supervisor of dissertations of Ethiopian PhD students both at the University of Tampere (a finalised dissertation is Adamu, 2014) and at the College of Education, Addis Ababa University.

Different perspectives to transnational influences in education policy

In the field of comparative education, there is a vast and growing amount of research on how education policy agendas are formed at the transnational level and how these influence policy

making in individual countries (e.g., Chabbott, 2002; Mundy, 2007; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). In this literature, one can distinguish between two perspectives. One focuses on how development agencies can influence policy decisions through framing policy discussions and related technical advice, and through prioritizations that materialize in projects and sector programs (e.g., King, 2004; Samoff, 1999). This perspective can be further refined by analysing how local technocratic elites of developing countries may act in alliance with the external agencies (Gould & Ojanen, 2003). The other perspective is more open to also identifying how national policies may modify or reject parts of the transnational agenda (e.g., Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Takala, 1998; Takala, 2008).

The globally defined Education-for-All by 2015 target is an example of strong external influence on national policy-making, obligating countries to build their education policies and sector plans around this target. The EFA agenda has contributed to a policy consensus between the donor agencies and developing country governments: enrollment in primary education is to be increased at a maximum possible pace, special attention is to be given to gender equality and to other dimensions of socio-cultural disadvantage, and the quality of education is to be improved. For countries which have participated in the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative/Global Partnership for Education, external influence has become tangible in the "indicative framework," which defines target parameters for resource allocation and cost-efficiency in the education sector (World Bank 2004). But even in this case, the actual importance of such prescriptions is found to be variable in different countries (Cambridge Education, 2010).

For the purpose of this article, it is important to note that any generalizing analysis on the influence of the World Bank and bilateral donor agencies on national education policies is misguided. First, this influence is obviously variable across countries and related to their degree of dependency on external funding. It is also variable in different policy issues: for example, constructing and equipping science laboratories in schools and universities is closely tied to external funding, whereas the content of the primary school curriculum and the language of instruction are more immune to external interventions.

An intriguing finding related to the topic of this article has emerged from previous studies conducted by the author together with colleagues. In interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Education and donor agencies in Mozambique, one question concerned the origin of the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) in the education sector. The Mozambican respondents maintained that because of their accumulated negative experience with the project mode of external assistance, they devised and decided upon the SWAp and then "sold it to the donors." By contrast, on the donor side the interviewees definitely saw the same process as having been initiated, conditioned and steered by the donors (Takala & Marope, 2003). A subsequent study of the preparation process of the first Education Sector Development Program in Ethiopia found through a questionnaire survey and interviews that in the opinion of both the Ethiopian participants in this process and the donor representatives involved, the adoption of the SWAP was genuinely initiated and led by the Ethiopian Ministry of

Education (Martin, Oksanen & Takala, 2000). This corresponds to the view of Mozambican informants on the origin of SWAP in the education sector in their country, but in Ethiopia this interpretation of events was not contested by an alternative view, as was the case in Mozambique.

This article looks at the policy of educational assessment constructed as a transnational agenda and how this agenda is manifested in the activities of the READ (Russia Education Aid for Development) program. The case of Ethiopia as one of the partners of this program is analysed on the basis of the READ reports, on the one hand, and the ESDP and GEQIP documents on the other.

The transnational agenda of assessment

The transnational agenda on assessment of learning outcomes is constructed within a network of actors that does not have clear boundaries or an identifiable center of power or thought from where the agenda emanates. The network shares a common belief in the necessity of measuring learning outcomes as a key precondition for improving education quality worldwide (e.g., UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2013; World Bank, 2013; Center for Global Development, 2013). Actors within the network consist of a wide range of multilateral organizations (e.g., the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD), regional networks (e.g., SACMEQ), private professional bodies (e.g., Brookings Institute, Educational Testing Services), academic experts and consultants.

Improvement of education quality can of course be justified by reference to any objectives set for the education system. In contrast, the typical justification expressed for the transnational assessment agenda is notably narrow and even monotonous: reference is in numerous sources made to the finding that cognitive learning achievement – rather than years of schooling per se – has a positive impact on economic growth (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007; World Bank, 2011; Center for Global Development, 2013). Some of the references contain remarkably simplistic statements such as "a 10 % increase in the share of students reaching basic literacy translates into a 0.3 percentage higher annual growth rate for that country" (Gove & Cvelich, 2011, p.1). The corollary then becomes that a well-functioning system of assessing learning outcomes is "a key driver of economic growth and poverty reduction" (READ, 2010, p. 36), or in a sloganistic manner, "measuring for success", which was the title given to the READ final conference in May 2014.

The READ program

READ is a program funded during 2008-13 by the Russian Government and implemented by the World Bank through a Trust Fund agreement. The idea of READ was born in the context of the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative, FTI (later renamed Global Partnership for Education, GPE), which Russia joined in 2006. READ has operated in eight countries: Angola, Armenia, Ethiopia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mozambique, Tajikistan, Vietnam and Zambia. The selection of the READ countries was determined on the one hand by their being

beneficiaries of support from the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative, and on the other by either being former members of the Soviet Union or having ideological and financial link with the then USSR.

A significant feature in the READ set-up is that the beneficiary countries are receivers of external assistance to their educational development, from the Global Partnership of Education, World Bank projects and bilateral donors. In countries that are dependent on development assistance to education, the tendency towards measuring learning outcomes is also related to increased accountability demands on the donor organizations whose primary concern in the education sector was previously the growth of enrolment figures. For example, basic education assessment has become a component in the majority of World Bank financed education projects and its frequency has increased over time (Liberman & Clarke, 2012; Lockheed, 2013).

The aim of READ is to "help low-income countries to improve their student learning outcomes through the design, implementation and use of robust systems for student assessment" (READ, 2011, p.4). In addition, a large proportion of the READ funds goes to the World Bank for the development of "global products" in educational assessment. During its implementation, READ has become closely linked with SABER (System Analysis for Better Education Results), designed for the World Bank and with background work outsourced to the American Institutes for Research (READ, 2012). READ support to SABER started in 2010 and the latter has subsequently underpinned the work completed under the READ programme. In a remarkable change of terminology, the early "READ diagnoses" and other READ activities have been renamed as SABER activities (READ, 2011; 2012; 2013). It is also known that, in the African READ countries, READ is perceived as a World Bank program – quite understandably, as Russian experts have not been visible in its implementation in these countries.

The SABER student assessment framework stipulates a uniform ideal for all countries in their development of the different components of assessment systems (READ, 2011). The components included in the framework are, first, the results of both national and international large-scale assessments, which are signals that call for attempts to improve the quality of overall learning and give information on weak areas in learning outcomes that can be used in policy-decisions, such as revising curriculum content. Public high-stakes examinations are considered to be powerful means to guide the content of what happens in classrooms, and tools of classroom assessment are seen as necessary to improve pupils' performance both in examinations and large-scale assessments.

The SABER diagnoses create a picture where countries are placed "at different points on the continuum of assessment systems," where the terms "latent", "emerging", "established" "advanced" are used to mean "absence of, or deviation from, attribute", "on way to meeting minimum standard", "acceptable minimum standard" and "best practice", respectively (Clarke, 2012).

SABER is a clear example of framing an education policy issue as something where "international best practice" can be identified, agreed upon and distributed through programs or projects such as READ. By 2013, baseline studies following the SABER model had been conducted in all READ beneficiary countries. The numbers indicating the extent of SABER's global outreach are impressive: by the end of 2013, training in the use of the SABER Student Assessment Tool had been provided for over 2000 professionals and the tool had been used in more than 50 countries (READ, 2014).

The process of defining READ priorities at the country level involves consultation with national level policy makers and experts, but it is initiated, framed and finalized by World Bank staff. It begins with a baseline diagnosis on the state of the country's assessment system, which then leads to devising actions for improvement. Against the baseline further analysis of change achieved is undertaken (World Bank, 2013; Clarke, 2012). Within the eight READ countries, the emphasis given to the various components is notably variable and depends on the preferences of the national policy makers, which in turn may be influenced, though not determined, by the SABER diagnoses (READ, 2014). It is clear that on the basis of document analysis alone it would not be possible to definitely distinguish between "home-grown" and "externally influenced" priorities. As mentioned earlier, it is also doubtful whether such a conclusion could be derived even from interview data.

Ethiopian priorities

The education policy priorities of the Government of Ethiopia are expressed in the consecutive Education Sector Development Programs. ESDP III, being implemented from 2005 onwards, as a program preceded any possible influence from READ, whereas within the framework of ESDP IV, covering the years 2010-2015, external support is provided by a group of agencies through the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) (Phase I 2009-2013, Phase II 2014-2018).

In the **ESDP III** document**,** the overall goal of education sector development was partly defined in terms of economic growth and productivity, the target being to "transform Ethiopia into a middle-income country in 20-30 years". Emphasis was also given to sustainable rural development and promotion of democracy and related civic and ethical education (Ministry of Education 2005). Sample-based assessments of learning achievements were to be carried out at Grade 4 and Grade 8. The comprehensive view of desired learning outcomes requires that assessment not only be confined to the basic cognitive competencies of literacy and mathematics, but also extend to a broader area of knowledge and skills (Ministry of Education, 2005). In addition, the document mentions strengthening of school inspection as one means to improve the quality of education (Ministry of Education, 2005).

In contrast with the ESDP**,** the GEQIP Phase I documents imply justifies the program by reference to the need to build human capital for economic growth. GEQIP was prepared through intense negotiations between the Ethiopian Government and the education sector

donors and reflects their shared concern over the quality of primary (and secondary) education under conditions of rapid enrolment. In the area of assessment, a key objective was to monitor the ongoing revision of the curriculum (World Bank, 2008).

The results of the country-level diagnosis on the basis of the SABER framework are depicted in the following diagram:

Table 1. SABER diagnosis of the baseline situation of educational assessment in Ethiopia in 2009 and evaluation of change 2009-2013

	Latent	Emerging	Established	Advanced
Classroom Assessment				
Examinations		→		
NLSA		→		
ILSA				

Source: READ Annual Report (2013, p. 39) (NLSA = National Large Scale Assessment, ILSA = International Large Scale Assessment)

According to this diagnosis, the situation at the outset of the READ programme was quite variable between the different components, ranging from the low scores of "latent" for classroom assessment and international assessment studies, barely at the "emerging" level for national learning assessment, and a higher "emerging" level for examinations. The low score given for national assessment is noteworthy in light of the fact that such assessment at grade levels 4 and 8 was initiated in Ethiopia already in 2000, with subsequent studies carried out in 2004 and 2007 (Greaney & Kellaghan, 2008).

The diagram presented above depicts the change observed during 2009-2013 as having been significant in the national assessment component and more modest in examinations. Of these, the former still remained at the "emerging" stage, whereas examinations were deemed to have reached the borderline between "emerging" and established". Participation in international assessments and development of classroom assessment were not activities funded by READ in Ethiopia, but "improving the teaching and evaluation methods of teachers" (classroom assessment) is among the objectives of the GEQIP program (GEQIP, 2008).

The activities supported from the READ funds have been complemented by the multi-donor funded GEQIP and support from USAID and UNICEF. Hence, external influences are aligned and intertwined a way that prevents specific judgments on "Program organization X had an influence on activity Y." These activities include the following (READ 2011; READ 2013; READ 2014)

- establishment of a new autonomous National Education Assessment and Examinations Agency.
- establishment of Directorate for School Inspection at the Federal Ministry of Education.
- preparation of policy frameworks for the above-mentioned areas, as well as related training, study visits to South Africa, Ghana and the United States, and participation in international conferences.

Notably, school inspection is not a part of the SABER framework, and the allocation of READ funds to this area is a signal of the influence of Ethiopian priorities, as expressed already in ESDP III. Such prioritization reflects a top-down approach focusing on provision and maintenance of a standard set of inputs that are expected to have a positive effect on the quality of education, rather than a pedagogical approach to supervision (READ, 2010).

The READ Annual Report for 2010 specifically mentions that there is in Ethiopia "one individual with international standard technical skills in large-scale assessment" (READ, 2011, p.18).

In the ESDP IV document the target year for transforming Ethiopia into a middle-income country is set at 2025, and from this follows an emphasis on the teaching of science and mathematics from the primary level upwards (Ministry of Education, 2010). In comparison with ESDP III, where the economic rationale was counterbalanced by civic and ethical education, ESDP IV has in this respect become more aligned with the transnational discourse on the quality of education. The same trend is evident in the section on the curriculum reform where special mention is made of the training abroad received by curriculum developers and teacher educators in science and mathematics (Ministry of Education, 2010).

According to ESDP IV, the objective of improving student learning is to be achieved "through a consistent focus on the enhancement of the teaching/learning process and the transformation of the school into a motivational and child-friendly learning environment" and through "reinforcement and better coordination of key quality inputs and processes" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p.6). Program objectives related to assessment include aligning assessment and examinations with the ongoing curriculum reform (Ministry of Education, 2010). The document further notes that in spite of improvements during ESDP III in the level of teacher qualifications and material inputs, the average level of learning shown in the national assessments has been decreasing. To reverse this trend during ESDP IV, the target is set in precise numbers: "90 % of the students at all grade levels will score at least 50 % in examinations and assessments of every subject" (Ministry of Education, 2010).

The GEQIP Phase II document gives credit to Ethiopia as one of the few countries in Africa that have institutionalized a system of national assessment (GEQIP, 2012). If we compare the ratings given in 2013 for the individual READ countries in the domain of national assessments, only Zambia is evaluated as being at a higher level than Ethiopia – in addition, Armenia is set at par with Ethiopia (READ, 2013). A critical conclusion from previous GEQIP experience is that the School Grants made available as part of the program have mainly been used "for upgrading school infrastructure, and these are not likely to make measurable improvement in learning outcomes unless these grants are used strategically" (World Bank, 2012). As regards future development of assessment, examinations and school inspection, the respective activities initiated during Phase II are to be continued and developed further (World Bank, 2012).

Discussion

The analysis of the key education policy documents that present the priorities of the Government of Ethiopia and the consensus achieved with the donor community shows both sizable influences that can be traced back to the transnational agenda of educational assessment and some policy positions that reflect national prioritization. Identification of influences that could be attributed specifically to the READ program is circumscribed by the fact that the operations of the various external actors are aligned and intertwined, preventing simple judgments on "program/organization X had an influence on activity Y".

In the recent intense discussions on the post-2015 EFA goal, a growing number of actors have become concerned with educational assessment (see King & Palmer, 2012). The actors share an interest in keeping education high on the global political agenda, and in this situation, researchers may be tempted to mute their critical voices. The explicit criticism from researchers has emphasized that the transnational agenda of assessment is fundamentally flawed because it is "seeking to achieve what is measurable, without asking the fundamental question of whether what is measurable is worthwhile, valuable and meaningful" (Sayed, 2011). One can extend this question to ask whether the values that basic education seeks to promote are derived from the goal of economic growth or from other value perspectives, such as democracy or (other) ethical principles.

The criticisms notwithstanding, at the time of this writing, has become clear that the new EFA goal for 2030 is being formulated in a manner that will lend itself to standardized measurement of cognitive learning achievement. Indicators for learning outcomes have been proposed by the Global Partnership for Education (formerly EFA Fast-Track Initiative) at a general level: "The share of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of a grade appropriate text" and "The proportion of students who, by the end of the primary or basic education cycle, are able and demonstrate understanding of an appropriate text, as defined in the national curriculum or agreed by national education experts" (Global Partnership, 2012, p.128-9). The most recent

Education for All Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2015) is less specific on this issue, but recommends development of a "common metric linked to national learning assessments". Subsequently, the Framework for Action prepared for the 2015 World Education Forum states that "Learning outcomes must be well-defined in cognitive and non-cognitive domains, and continually assessed as an integral part of the teaching and learning process" (World Education Forum, 2015, p.5). Formulation of the target in the ESDP IV document such as "X % of students at a given grade will achieve at least a score of Y %" is already well suited to this purpose. As pointed out by Barrett (2011), this kind of simple information can be expected to easily catch political attention, but its value for educational development on the ground would be very limited and indirect at best.

The new EFA goal will provide a further boost to the weight of the transnational assessment activities in the political EFA discourse, as well as in the country level efforts towards EFA. The consequences for education policy-making will then be much more binding than anything that READ or a similar program can possibly have. It remains to be seen to what extent there will be space for national priorities within the globally prescribed setting and how, for example Ethiopia, might use this space in the years to come.

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Acknowledgements