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Culture and Education in Africa - The Missing Link: Consequences and Perspectives

If you forget your yesterday, your tomorrow will be confusing

A PRESENTATION BY ACALAN AT THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF CULTURE EXPERTS OF ECOWAS
BAMAKO 20-23 JULY 2010

www.acalan.org

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION

- Introduction: Current state of Education in Africa
- Consequences
- Paradigm Shift
- Way Forward
- Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

- Broadly, Education refers to the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another.
- Holistic approach.

INTRODUCTION (contd)

■ Current situation of Education in Africa

- (a) *The curriculum is neither informed nor inspired by African realities (culture)*
- (b) *The medium of instruction alienates the majority of the learners*
- (c) *There is a huge gap between the home and the school*

INTRODUCTION (contd)

- *The parameters in the search for the strategies that would allow Africans to participate actively in the knowledge production and bring about sustainable development that would change their lives for the better do not take into account the cultures and languages of the vast majority of Africans whose participation in the implementation of the strategies is critical. As a result, development, knowledge production and consumption remain a serious challenge in Africa.*

CONSEQUENCES

- Pedagogical
 - There is a higher rate of drop out.
- Economic/Financial
 - Investments into education are not commensurate with the outputs
- Cultural/Social
 - (a) The educational system leads to cultural alienation and mental colonization.
 - (b) The points of reference of the product of the educational system are located outside their cultural paradigm
 - (c) The education system is not a catalyst for development

PARADIGM SHIFT

- *The dissemination of culture through formal education becomes critical for a round and meaningful education that will allow Africans to regain the sense of self-esteem and self-pride.*
- *The successful linkage between culture and education, and re-shaping of the formal education system in Africa depend mainly on the availability of well trained teachers for African languages, particularly in L1 methodologies. This is critical as culture is embedded in language*

PARADIGM SHIFT

(contd)

- *The Khartoum Decisions*
- (a) *Linking culture with education*
- (b) *The charter of the African Cultural Renaissance*
- (c) *Second decade of Education in Africa; Rebuilding the African Systems of Education to take systematically on board African culture*
- *The African Cultural Renaissance Campaign*
- *Pan African Cultural Manifesto*
 - *The report on the Pan African conference on curriculum, literacy and book sector development*

PARADIGM SHIFT

(contd)

- *Culture- the peoples relationship with their environment in their struggle to change their lives for the better*

■ *The curriculum has to be inspired and be informed by the culture of the learners*
"Only when African realities informed by African history, language and culture are brought to the fore, can Africa make a meaningful and worthwhile contribution to the universal fund of culture and knowledge. Otherwise African countries will remain as scholarly appendages to the west. » -Prah (2003).

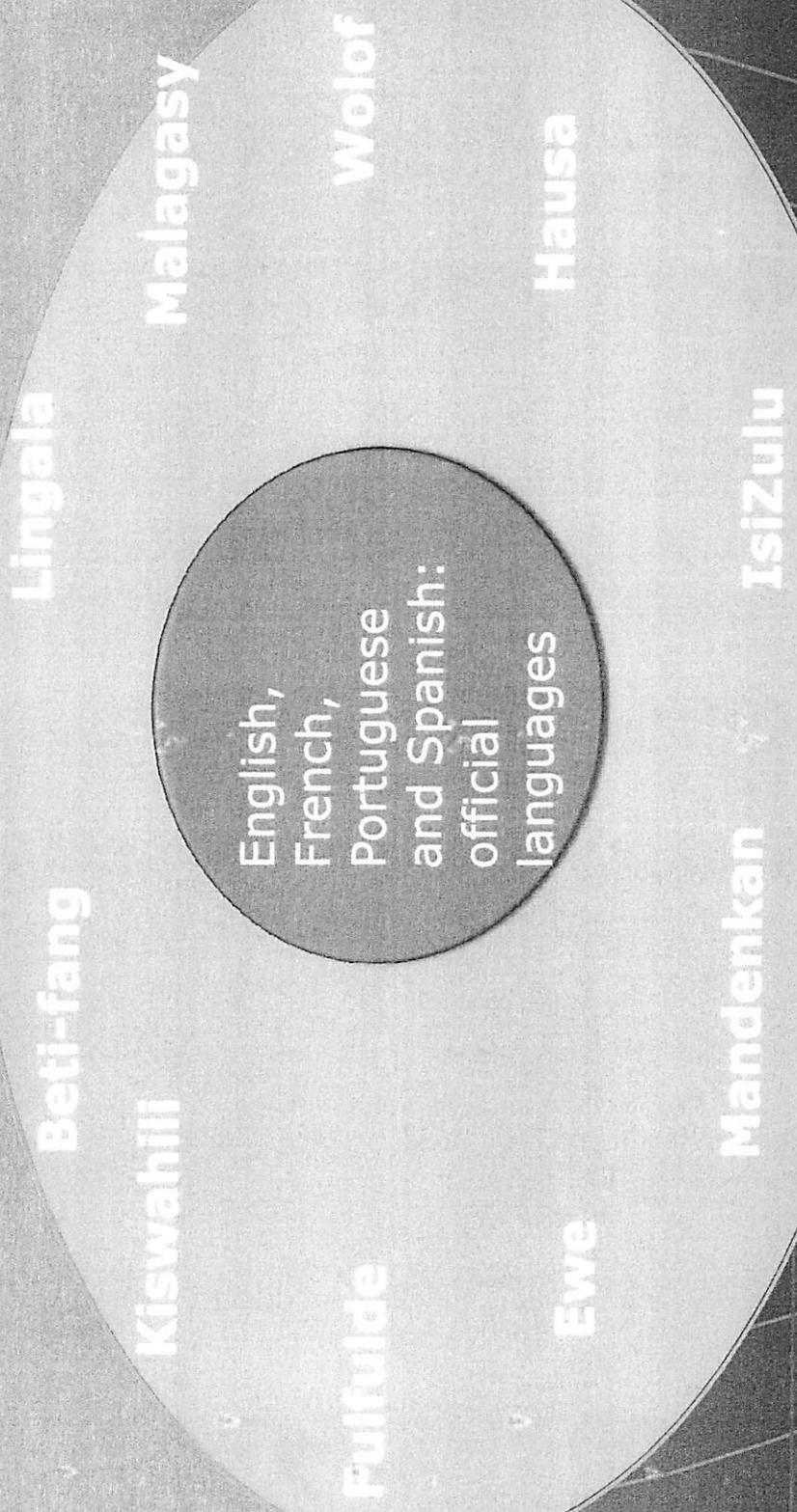
PARADIGM SHIFT

(contd)

- The Role of ACALAN
 - (a) Coordinate the process of the Rebuilding of the African Education Systems with the introduction of African languages as media of instruction: Mother tongue based education.
 - (b) Education/Language policies and Curriculum Reform/renewal prioritizing the African socio cultural realities

PARADIGM SHIFT (contd)

The relevance of the medium of instruction



**Changes on
Political/Social
Environment**

Collective dialogue

RECs Operational

PERSPECTIVES

Management skills

**Vehicular Cross-
border Languages**

**Availability of Human
Resources**

**Harmonization of
Education Systems**

PARADIGM SHIFT (contd)

▪ Political will

- (a) There is the political will today which translates into the creation of institutions such as ACALAN, whose mandate is to develop and promote the use of African languages in all spheres of the society, which in turn will contribute to the African Renaissance.
- (b) Partnership between ACALAN, the Ministries of Culture and Education, the RECs and other Technical and Financial Partners will ensure a smooth success of the program.

Perspectives

- Linking culture and Education: how far are we and how much do we know?

ANSWER

■ **Situational analysis**

- (a) *Accurate, reliable*
- (b) *But not cost effective*

■ **Meeting of Experts**

- (a) *Sharing of experiences*
- (b) *Cross fertilization of ideas*
- (c) *Cost effective*

Leadership

CHALLENGES

Mobilization of
Resources

Mobilization of
Human Resources

Communication

CONCLUSION

- In order for our educational system to be meaningful and bring about sustainable development that will change our lives for the better, there should be a link between culture and education.

Put differently, Culture and education are siamese twins that cannot and should not be separated, they are like songs and the melodies. Just as a song cannot be separated from its melodies so education should not be seen as being separate from culture.

- Thank you very much!
- Obrigado!
- Merci beaucoup!
- Aw ní ce!
- Sanu nkú!
- Njarama!

2010

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technical committee meeting of culture
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