

Call for workshop and book chapter contributions:
Education Stories in times of colonization and decolonization in Africa
(1920s - 1970s)



Source: *Misjonsselskapets barneblad* 1938, Mission and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University

The CEPED (France), the CESSMA (France), VID Specialized University (Norway) and Dalarna University (Sweden) would like to invite researchers on the history of education in Africa, from the Maghreb to South Africa, to contribute with a chapter contribution to «**Education Stories in times of colonization and decolonization in Africa (1920s - 1970s)**».

Please send an abstract (1500 signs) of your proposal by 17 January 2020 to for.an.education.network@gmail.com

Authors of selected papers will be notified by 7 February 2020 and invited for an international workshop to be held in Paris, April 21-22, 2020 on Education Stories in times of colonization and decolonization in Africa (1920s - 1970s). **Contributing authors are expected to submit full paper contributions of 6000 words to the volume by March 31, 2020.**

The book will be edited by Lars Berge and Ellen Vea Rosnes and publish in English.

With this call for chapter contributions and a workshop, we aim to bring together researchers working on the history of education and thereby strengthen our international network.

By education stories, we mean historically documented (hi)stories of education. The stories might be stories found in the archives, so far undiscovered archival material and stories collected through oral methods. The stories can be told from different actors' perspectives, but special attention is given to voices which have been marginalized. Various actors were involved in colonial and postcolonial education in Africa, such as pupils, parents, teachers,

policy makers, colonial administrators, bureaucrats, politicians and religious educators. In highly hierarchical and segregated colonial societies, processes of marginalization or subalternization can be addressed through the relational dynamics between these situated actors. The institutions they represented could be “traditional”, social, political or religious: a State, a colonial power, Islamic organizations, a missionary society, the family, the region, the municipality or the village. These institutions contributed in different ways to colonization and decolonization through education and were often intertwined. Educational institutions were main contact zones between the colonizer and the colonized, the political elites and the people in general. The concept of “contact zone” has been introduced by Marie Louise Pratt in reference to “social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). All actors were, in different ways, impacted by meetings in various contact zones and the question to whom they should be loyal became important.¹

In line with current postcolonial research, this book project will emphasize that there are multiple co-existing and interacting narratives (Chakrabarty, 2007). The approach of “Concurrences” relates to this challenge and aims to communicate the plurality in one narrative (Fur, 2017). Attention to concurrences is a methodological tool in the study of colonial and cultural encounters. Recognizing concurrences is about respecting pluralism and expecting entanglements. Concurrences aims for dialogue, multi-disciplinarity and collaboration. It is about finding and telling different concurrent stories with an awareness that every story is told from a certain perspective.

The contribution of educational institutions in the larger colonial project in different colonies have been well documented, but nuanced and contextual studies (in time, space and “contact zones”) still need to be written. Novels have been very illustrative to the fact that education participated in the nascent awareness that led to the decolonization movements: examples are Cheikh Hamidou Kane’s *Ambiguous Adventure*, *L’enfant noir* by Camara Laye, *The River Between* by Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Mémoires d’un militant du Tiers Monde* by Mamadou Dia and *When we were young* by S.O. Biobaku. Colonial schools trained the future nationalist elites, party leaders and independentist parties. The school is a particularly relevant institution to observe and to understand the colonial “encounter”, the contradictions, conflicts, negotiations and domestication processes at work. Educational systems aimed at fostering or constructing certain ideas of identity and a sense of belonging. The underlying aim was to develop loyal subjects or citizens in line with and/or in conflict with people’s lived lives and aspirations.

Since the 1960s, the history of education has grasped a variety of topics. Research has often focused on educational policies but has also looked upon the ways colonized societies have appropriated schools by adapting them to their own interests. The contents of courses, the pedagogical relationships and the forms of sociability within schools have been researched as well. These pieces of research have given us a better understanding of how education was

¹ Connected Histories - Contested Values. World Lutheranism and Decolonisation: Processes of Transloyalties, 1919-1970 (CHCV) (<https://app.cristin.no/projects/show.jsf?id=674850>).

enshrined in and participated in the racialisation of colonised societies, the shaping of new gender orders, and the building of new groups and hierarchies. The studies on the decolonisation movements and the processes of nation building have demonstrated that the newly independent countries inherited schooling systems that were unequal, underdeveloped and disorganised. From that point, they moved on to examine the part of schooling in the training of new African executives, in the birth of senses of nationhood and in the attempts at decolonizing knowledge.

While these questions need to be deepened by new field-research and case-studies, others still have to be addressed. For instance, deep research has been done on the role of schools in the training of the nationalist and independentist elites, but we know little about the collaboration and arrangements with the colonial and neo-colonial powers which allowed for the reproduction, beyond independence, of elitist forms of power which benefited the nationalist elites, at the expense of the people. Furthermore, the history of the subaltern actors of the schooling system has barely been outlined. Thus, while there are many pieces of research on the European teachers and on the African elites trained in the most prestigious schools, we still have to write a social history of African teachers, especially in rural settings. We also need to focus on the pupils, boys and girls, who did not go beyond primary school. Finally, there is a lack of research on African claims and actions in the field of schooling. These claims were expressed in petitions to the governments and they asked for an expansion of educational facilities, but more research needs to be done to understand them fully. Africans also opened their own schools or schooling systems, including during the colonial period, either to compensate for a lack of schools or to promote alternative schooling models. This was the case with koranic schools, more or less integrated within the state system of education, but many other initiatives existed. Up to now, these claims and initiatives have been studied mainly from the perspectives of nationalism and activism. They would be usefully integrated into the field of history of education.

This workshop and book project will promote contributions that shed light on the multiplicity of voices and narratives, on their co-existence and forms of interactions, and on the way they emerged from and reshaped relations of power. We aim to include new methodological and theoretical aspects in order to question our research practices and try to renew them. We aim at a critical approach of the archives and their records (Baillkin, 2015). Missionary sources, documents produced by colonial or postcolonial administrations, papers kept in schools, textbooks, schools' maps, letters, pictures: what sources do we use first and foremost? What history can we write with them? How can we ask new questions to these sources and broaden our body of documentation? What can methods of oral history contribute with? We can also reflect upon the dialogues that, as historians of education in Africa, we try to create with other fields of research. The recent criticisms from African philosophers of education (Abdi, 2012), written from a theoretical standpoint, could challenge our empirical studies. Similarly, how do we work in the field of education with the criticisms of Western feminism by African feminists? To what extent does the history of education in Africa dialogue with theoretical apparatuses developed from other continents, such as the Subaltern Studies from India or the South-American theories of decoloniality?

Suggested themes:

- male and female actors of education stories in Africa
- influence of education on individual and collective identities and (trans)loyalties
- impacts of education on social and economic changes for people.
- circulation of policies (aims, concepts, and practices) between colonial headquarters, universities, institutes of education, and colonies.
- quantitative approach of schools' equipment in Africa.
- narrative research in the History of Education
- theoretical and methodological considerations about concepts and sources

Thank you for your proposals.

We would be glad to welcome you.

Dr Lars Berge, DUCAS, Dalarna University, Assistant professor

Dr Pierre Guidi, CEPED, Université Paris Descartes, Chercheur IRD

Dr Jean Luc Martineau, CESSMA, INALCO, Maître de conférence

Dr Ellen Vea Rosnes, VID Specialized University, Stavanger, Associate professor

Florence Wenzek, CERLIS, Université Paris-Descartes, Agrégée d'histoire and PhD student.

Closing date for applications is 17 January 2020.

In your email to for.an.education.network@gmail.com, please specify your surname, your names, your institution or university, your address, email address, and current position

Apart from the topics of your summary, on which topics/countries/issues in history of education are you working on?

Abdi, A. A (ed.) (2012), *Decolonizing Philosophies of Education*, Rotterdam, Sense Publishers.

Bailkin, J. (2015). Where did the Empire Go? Archives and Decolonization in Britain. *The American Historical Review*, 120, pp. 884-99.

Chakrabarty, D. (2007). *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fur, G. (2017). Concurrences as a Methodology for Discerning Concurrent Histories. In D. Brydon, P. Forsgren & G. Fur (Eds.), *Concurrent Imaginaries, Postcolonial Worlds. Toward Revised Histories* (pp. 33-57). Leiden: Brill

Pratt, M. L. (1991). Arts of Contact Zone. *Profession*, pp. 33-40.

