

# EDUCATE OR PERISH

## AFRICA'S IMPASS AND PROSPECTS

Education is an element of social reproduction and renewal, essential for the progress of any country. When this element is abolished, there occurs a deep reduction in the basic metabolism of society.

This is true today for Africa south of the Sahara, where instead of giving rise to societies of a higher level, the educational system has helped to dismantle them. Rather than acting as a driving force, it acts like a time bomb, which, with the demographic rise, drains without compensation the economic resources and destroys the social structures and sterilizes cultures.

The question arises as to whether the African educational system is not an unavoidable reflection of under-development. Can it, for example, produce graduates adapted to the job market when the latter is inflexible or non-existent? Is there no end to this vicious cycle? Is «Education for All» in this context, a possible solution or just an empty slogan?

The present study is a UNESCO/UNICEF initiative, an attempt to answer some of these burning questions. This has been done precisely by clarifying basic concepts, specifying the necessary conditions for a fundamental change in the African educational system.

Education is a right, but most of all, a duty for all. It is essential to all development operations. However, it will not be capable of claiming the stakes in the future unless it wholly assumes its historical heritage and using a democratization and Africanization strategy open to the positive contributions of the world, fully occupying a distinct geographical and social space.

Education is more of an obligation than a challenge.

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