

Column Corruption - A social disease • Part 157

## Educational paradigm shift: What can Namibia learn from other countries?

Education is part of development, and development is a systemic concept.

All development is inherently sustainable, if not; it should not be interpreted as development. Gharajedaghi described development as participation and influence of all (politics), delivering of goods and services to create wealth for everybody (economics), increasing knowledge, insight and understanding for all (science and technology), creating peace and harmony for all (ethics and morality), and creating inspiration and motivation for all (aesthetics). Nobody should be left out in the Land of the Brave as said by the president on numerous occasions speaking about the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

All these elements of development need to form part of an institution and/or a person to be "developed". Often institutions and people are lopsided and skewed in their development.

For example, institutions and people may be excellent at making money. However, the same institutions may be greedy and self-centred in spending their profit on "bling" to boost their brand in spite of compromised reliability and integrity. Instead, they should focus on developing their character, making a difference in society and the environment to ensure the future of our children.

There are positive correlations between human development and various other indicators such as average years of schooling, under five mortality rate and life expectancy.

Countries where children spend the most years at school are also the most developed in terms of human competencies. Scandinavian countries all belong to this category.

Finland is considered by some indices as having the most appropriate school system. Children spend less time in classrooms compared to some other developed countries.

Germany has a school system where children are identified at



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an early age for a technical or academic stream.

### QUALITY EDUCATION

Namibia's educational system must improve in terms of quality. We need the best technical people and less academics with titles. Kenya is providing free internet access to school children. That enabled them to make huge strides in education.

Cell phones will in future be used more often for teaching purposes.

If Namibia can provide free internet access to school children, we do not need libraries stacked with old books. It occupies space that can be used as classrooms.

We need virtual classrooms. In California, this has been possible already more than 20 years ago. Internationally recognised lecturers can lecture to a number of classes in Namibia and other countries simultaneously. This can make education much more affordable in Namibia. The University of Stellenbosch is already doing this in Namibia.

We can export education from Namibia. The University of Science and Technology needs to step up and fill the open spaces.

In Finland, public schools are so good that private schools are not needed. Can this be similar in Namibia?

How can we do it? We need to identify the top 10% of school

leavers in Namibia and inspire some of them to study education and a specific discipline.

Singapore made huge strides by recruiting international lecturers of the best quality and today they are one of the newly industrialised economies. In the 1950s they were a dysfunctional society.

Teachers need to obtain at least Honours degrees and preferably Masters in order to teach. They should be paid similar to professionals such as medical doctors. This is possible if we reduce spending on defence and national intelligence.

We need top quality teachers in Namibia and not soldiers that follow commands and are neither taught to think independently nor entrepreneurial in a business sense. The military will not provide for innovation, patents and technological breakthroughs in Namibia.

### OUTDOOR LEARNING

In Namibia, we must expose our children more to outdoor learning. Outstanding work is being done by the Namibia Environmental Educational Trust (NaDEET). Pre-primary and primary education needs to facilitate more learning in the environment where children can interact with plants, animals and insects.

Horses can be used effectively for relating to children with disabilities and attention deficit disorders. Horse therapy is excellent for treating children and adults and is quite unused in Namibia compared to Germany.

Many children are hyperactive given the boredom of classrooms, curricula and frustrated teachers. There is much to learn from other countries about what can be done to enable a paradigm shift in education to excel exponentially in development.

### References

Gharajedaghi, J. 1982. Towards A Systems Theory of Organization. Pennsylvania: Intersystems Publications.

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