The Role of Education on Citizenship Development in Africa

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Abstract

This article addresses the role of education and schooling in particular, to the development of citizens within the African continent. Historically, citizenship education has always been regarded as a western concept within the African continent (Ali, 2008; Mautle, 2000). This has exacerbated the narrow view that citizenship education is new as its approach in schools is often western oriented. Drawing from post colonial theory, I argue that though education and schooling in particular have played a pivotal role in the development of citizens in Africa during the post independence era, citizenship education is not a new concept. I further interrogate the African governments' efforts and initiatives in fostering citizenship through schooling. I argue that if we move beyond any labeling essentialities, citizenship education has always been part and parcel of the focus of education among these nations and schools have also served as agents of social change. This is exemplified by the different national projects as enunciated in educational policies which include among others; access to education, language policies, indigenous knowledge systems and the Africanization of the school curriculum to make it relevant to the national needs. I conclude that these initiatives were a deliberate effort toward citizenship development aimed at providing children with a certain kind of education ideal for national development within the emerging nations. Therefore, I recommend that the teaching of citizenship education through social studies in primary schools should be re-conceptualized to reflect the local contexts and their ways of knowing in order to deconstruct the master narratives that are often abstract and western oriented.

Key words*: Citizenship education, Africa, Social Studies, Schooling, Primary Education, Africanization, Educational Policies.*

1. Introduction

Africa is a vast continent with more than fifty countries that call for respect in its rich diversity in terms of background, languages, ethnicities, cultures and origins (Samoff, 1999). The 1950's and 1960's saw most of the African nations gain their independence from their colonial masters such that by 1960, 17 countries out of 53 nations had achieved sovereignty (Young, 2004; Samoff, 1999). At independence, these countries inherited institutional legacies from the colonial era because the authorities simply handed over their colonial culture without any consideration of the existing political culture in their countries. This posed a lot of problems since the political systems of the colonial masters were incongruent with the political culture of the diverse ethnic groups and their traditional social and economic heritages (Adeyemi & Asimeng-Boahene, 1999). The decolonization era and the achievement of independence by some African nations were a defining historical moment and a culmination of an epic struggle (Young, 2004). The decolonization process was met with a sense of excitement, hope and anticipation as the "new states" appeared to shed the colonial legacy and reinvent themselves (Young, 2004; Samoff, 1999). As a result of decolonization, the 'new African states' were faced with a mammoth task of nation-building. Nation building is defined as a process of creating a sense of national loyalty and identification among a population that has traditionally been divided into numerous tribes, ethnic groups or smaller political units (Adeyemi & Asimeng-Boahene, 1999). According to Young (2004) the notion of developing new states (nation-building) after independence was not an easy one as post-colonial governments were faced with problems and pressure emanating from meeting the promises that were made during the anti-colonial mobilization and struggle. People had a lot of expectations as; the young militants who provided the muscle of nationalist movements expected opportunities for employment.

New intellectuals emerging from universities expected guarantees of incorporation into the upper ranks of the state bureaucracy, parents hoped that pledges of rapid school expansion, even universal primary education, would materialize as well as social infrastructure promises in the provision of health and clinics, safe drinking water and roads will be delivered (Young, 2004). This appears to have been a tall order for the newly formed governments that needed to be attended to in order to maintain the hope and excitement of the epochal new era in African politics. However, when African nations rid themselves of European colonial domination, most of the post-colonial governments invested heavily in education at different levels, basically placing it at the centre of the national project of social advancement and development. It is further stated that the Ministries of education were tasked of formulating educational policies and programmes that were aimed at producing people equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for the realization of 'national development' and nation-building" (Nabudere, 2007). Education was seen as an important vehicle for bringing about development and change as these countries had inherited underdeveloped and racially segregated education systems that were characterized by inequalities and regarded as irrelevant for the needs of the African people. The major educational trends of African nations in the post colonial era has been to change the content of the curriculum from those that reflected the world views of the colonial powers to attitudes and knowledge that is geared towards nationalism, African identity, cultures and environments (Merryfield & Tlou, 1995). This was done through the introduction of social studies within the school curriculum following the 1968 Mombasa Conference that gave birth to the African Social Studies Programme (ASSP) (EDC/CREDO, 1968) which now pioneers the development of Social Studies in Africa.

2. Theoretical Framework

This article adopted a postcolonial lens to highlight that mainstream academic knowledge in post colonial societies continue to ignore, marginalize and render other forms of knowing invisible. Post colonial theory advocates for a number of issues in relation to education .These issues include among others; decolonizing knowledge and the production of transformative knowledge, mapping out the manifestations of the power of the west to the rest and locating how the dichotomous representation of the world establishes a rigid division between local/global, citizen/foreigner, civilized/uncivilized, and also challenges the discourse of nationalism (Subedi & Daza, 2008). This querying nature of post colonial theory makes it undoubtedly an invaluable tool for the analysis and understanding of the perpetual legacy of colonialism and its forceful mechanisms "since the nineteenth century imperialism left very few places on earth untouched" (Said, 1993).

The marginalization of local knowledge systems that relegated all things indigenous as unworthy, uncivilized, barbaric and superstitious was established during the colonial era. Western forms of cultural, economic, political and social systems were institutionalized during the colonial period and continue to be maintained during the post-independence times (Chilisa, 2005). This article grows out of such concerns about how schools often reinforce or privilege western forms of knowing and knowledge construction. African post-colonial scholars have argued that citizenship education as practiced has been imposed on Africans by Western countries without any consideration of their local cultures and contexts (Ali, Ellis, & Sizha, 2005; Ali, 2008; Divala, 2007; Chachange, 2001). This in turn has made African education an elusive dream that draws largely from mainstream academic knowledge without any consideration of other diverse knowledge systems that prevail among these nations   .

3. Overview of Citizenship Education in Africa: Past and Present

Within the African traditional context citizenship education was seen as a type of education that was used to induct new members of the society through the transmission of their cultural heritage to the young in order to develop a feeling of national pride in people (Asimeng-Boahene, 2000; Mafela & Mgadla, 2000). The major aim of this indigenous citizenship education was to train individuals to be useful and acceptable in the society. This education was collectivist in nature as it put more emphasis on the society as a whole rather than the individual. Oral tradition was used as a medium for the transmission of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and patterns of behavior to young learners. There was no written syllabus to follow as it was oral therefore; each member of the society had a responsibility to teach the young ones the mores and values of the society through examples, reprimand, imitation and association. It was through proverbs, riddles, stories, songs, myths, and legends that "children were taught respect for elders, instilled with morals and positive attitudes, and imbibed with the cultural heritage and values of their people" (Omatseye & Omatseye, 2008, p. 163). For instance; In most African contexts young women learned through associating with womenfolk by imitating their elders in duties such as cooking, hoeing, and fetching water. In Ghana, like in many other African cultures, every elderly in the society had a right to discipline, educate and mould a child (Asimeng-Boahene, 2000). In Botswana and Zimbabwe young boys herded calves, goats and sheep before graduating to herding cattle and joining regiments and this situation was common to most African societies (Mafela & Mgadla, 2000).

However, this form of education was greatly impacted by the introduction of western forms of education that permeated the African continent during the 19th century colonial expansion.

Colonial education sought to erode and distort indigenous education programs by embarking on an essential project of Europe's onslaught on the African body and mind (Ali, 2008). It should be noted that during the colonial era citizenship education programs within the African countries were non-existent primarily because colonialism was not aimed at developing critical African citizens. Interestingly, the post colonial era led by the ruling African elite did not engage in any viable expansive and constructive political education except in a few cases where the agenda was to assure loyalty of the public to the military junta and civilian dictators. Therefore, citizenship education within the post colonial nations of Africa is said to be defined within the western democratic frameworks that are characterized by the nation-state, individual rights and political activity such as voting (Ali, 2008).

4. Schooling and the Development of Citizens

In Africa schools have been used as instruments of social change (Verspoor, 2008; Stampf, 1996) and their main function has been to facilitate acceptance of change and to develop individuals with an inquiring attitude (EDC/CREDO, 1968). However, research conducted in sub-Saharan Africa has shown that most of the curriculum and education policies adopted in most post African colonial societies have failed to develop a critical mind in learners (Scanlon, 2002; Otiende & Oanda, 2000; Harber, 1997). At independence, African nations inherited underdeveloped and racially segregated education systems that were characterized by inequalities and regarded as irrelevant to the needs of the people. These countries set out to reform or restructure their education systems through adjusting education cycles, increasing access, changing curriculum content and aligning education and training to the perceived requirements for national and socio-economic development. Formal education through schooling was therefore charged with the responsibility of developing citizens by preparing young Africans for their roles in the global economy through providing them with knowledge, skills and work discipline (Samoff, 1999). I want to argue that there are various ways in which schooling or education was used to develop "good" citizens among African nations and I focus on the following;1. Expansion of access to education; 2. Educational policies; 3. Language policies; 4. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IK's); 5. Africanizing the social Studies curriculum; 6. Relevance to national needs.

4.1 Access to Education

One way in which African nations used schooling to develop citizenship was through the expansion of access to education. According to Stampf (1996) the notion of expansion of access to education can be traced back to the megatrends that influenced and gave direction to the development of education in post colonial Africa such as the United Nations First Development Decade (1961-1971) which gave priority to the expansion of secondary and tertiary education and the Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa (1961) which provided a forum for African countries to decide on their priorities in education to promote economic and social development. It was at the All Africa States Conference held in Addis Ababa in 1967 that the importance of educational expansion was re-emphasized (Stampf, 1996). At this conference African countries acknowledged the importance of education and resolved to provide: "free universal primary education by 1980; secondary education to at least 30% of those pupils who had successfully completed primary education; higher education to at least 20% of those candidates who had successfully completed primary education; and improving the quality of education at all levels of the education" (Stampf, 1996, p.33). From the commitments made at

the 1967 conference it can be argued that African countries were committed to developing their citizens and not only citizens but a certain quality of a citizenry that was educated and informed. To me, this is where the notion of a "good" citizen comes in, in that a good citizen has been defined as someone who is well informed, knowledgeable and has problem-solving skills (Engle and Ochoa, 1988). The expansion of access to education was seen as a way to transform the society massively and rapidly, at the same time it was seen as a way in which governments could meet their commitments to move toward schooling for all their citizens (Samoff, 1999). This led to the opening of new schools in urban neighborhoods as well as in rural areas. However African governments made a remarkable progress in this regard.

In 1990 governments, international and non-governmental organizations committed themselves to "Education for All" at an important world conference in Jomtein, Thailand (Brocke-Utne, 2001; Samoff, 1999; Nekhwevha, 1999). The major themes of the Jomtein World Conference on "Education for All" were that: education is a fundamental right; the key to personal and social improvement; and that basic education should therefore be provided to all (Nekhwevha, 1999). Some African governments also committed themselves to providing "Education for All" to their citizens through increasing support for universal primary education (Stampf, 1996). However, in spite of the good intentions by African Governments, African countries found themselves unable to meet their promises of providing education for all primarily because they did not have the financial muscle to execute those plans. What is interesting is that these African countries maintained their commitment to education even in periods of dire economic need and adopted structural adjustment programs from the international financial organizations such as the IMF and World Bank. These structural adjustments often termed "liberalization" emphasized substantial devaluation, decreased direct government role in the economy, reduction in the size of the civil service, encouragement of foreign investment and support for privatization (Samoff, 1999). Tickly (2004) is very critical about multi-lateral corporations and has referred to the state of affairs surrounding the discourse around 'development' as exhibited by policies and programmes of the World Bank, IMF and other multilateral development agencies as the new imperialism. The argument is that this liberalization has eventually led to the demise of expanded access to education as some countries cannot afford to educate their citizens due to lack of funds, a situation that renders African education and schooling in particular an elusive dream.

4.2 Educational Policies

The promulgation of new educational policies among some African nations was one way of developing citizens. These policies emanated from either political party manifestos such as in the case of Kenya and Tanzania while others were a result of national commissions that reviewed the *status quo* such as Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho (Samoff, 1999; Stampf, 1996). The purposes of such educational policies were to give direction towards education in an effort to align it to the needs of the society. Some of the policies that I discuss are; the policy on *Education for Self Reliance* in Tanzania, the *Harambee schools* in Kenya and *Education for Kagisano* in Botswana. I argue vehemently that such policies were geared towards the development of good citizens in their own countries as they redirected the educational path of children in order to reorient them to a certain kind of people that they aspired for.

4.2.1 Education for Self Reliance in Tanzania (Ujamaa)

Ali (2008) opines that even though there were not many programs of citizenship education in the post-colonial era in Africa, there was one exception with regard to Julius Nyerere's educational policy of the *Ujamaa* (A Swahili word meaning family and working cooperatively) programs especially his popularly known philosophy of "Education for Self Reliance" (1968). *Ujamaa* was adopted as a slogan for the Tanzanian brand of socialism and "was based on the principles of equality and respect for human dignity; sharing resources produced by the efforts of all and; work by all and exploitation by none" (Omatseye & Omatseye, 2008, p. 165). Nyerere's philosophy of education was a unique program of teaching and learning that explicated the type of citizenship education needed in Tanzania which involved working together for the common good and the inculcation of a commitment to the community as a whole. He abhorred colonial sentiments embedded in the past and advocated for values appropriate to the future and culture of the people of Tanzania (Ali, 2008). In view of Nyerere's educational plan, one is inclined to conclude that this was a man with a vision for his country and for many he was seen to be very critical of the legacy of British colonial education that was inherited at independence in Tanzania. He proposed an education system that was geared towards producing farmers, critical and responsible citizens, able to think for themselves and make judgments on all issues affecting them, and be able to understand and interpret critical government activities and such type of citizenship education was seen as viable for national development. Through these initiatives, Nyerere spelled out the modalities of developing a "good citizen" in the Tanzanian sense. It is against this background that I see educational policies being used in the development of citizens. However, Nyerere's "grand plan" was not successful in achieving its objectives because it became a victim of combined forces of world capitalism and educated Tanzanians who wanted to gain recognition and personal advancement at the expense of the majority of the people (Ali, 2008).

4.2.2 The "Harambee" Schools in Kenya

When Kenya gained independence in 1963, a different socialization process was needed to change the racial and ethnic prejudices that had been nurtured during the colonial era and to build national unity (Omatseye and Omatseye , 2008). They further argue that given the circumstances, appropriate education was needed to prepare people to take up their roles in the society. A greater role in this respect was placed on education as a vehicle for national development, increasing income and enhancing the quality of life (Stampf, 1996). The quest for more education put the government under pressure, yet it was clear that the government could not provide the necessary schools. As a result of this pressure, the first president of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta encouraged the country to form community- based self-help schools in the spirit of *"Harambee"* (which literally means *"let us pull together"*). Though at the beginning these schools were met with ambivalence, they were later recognized by the Second National Development Plan (1970-1974) as a means of improving the quality and efficiency of education (Stampf, 1996). However, their support from the government quickly dwindled as they were criticized for not providing pupils with relevant qualifications consistent with the needs of the economy. The recommendations of the Third Development Plan (1974-1979) called for an education system that provided high-level manpower for the economic and industrial development and skills for Kenyanization required. The development plan focused on putting emphasis on providing technical and vocational education, changing attitudes of people to assist in the development of the country, on the job training in agriculture, increasing literacy and ensuring equality of educational opportunity (Omatseye & Omatseye, 2008).

If we move beyond the myopic views of labeling essentialities it is arguable that citizenship education is not a new concept in Kenya. Considering Soltis (1988) contention that generally all education has an element of citizenship training then Kenya was not an exception in that the development of the *harambee* schools was not accidental. It was planned and indicative of a sense of agency, collectivity, cooperation, and determination towards the development of a particular citizenry. These were self-help schools that required local people to pool their financial and labor resources to build community projects such as schools. The *harambee* schools promoted the spirit of self reliance which was not a new development in Kenya or the African continent in general. This initiative by President Kenyatta led to the mushrooming of the *harambee* schools in villages. It can be argued that such developments in education where schools were built through self-help not only promoted self reliance but instilled in people the spirit of cooperation, independence, patriotism and the need for national development. In view of these accounts I argue that such African initiatives based on their culture and traditions called for a certain type of citizenry desirable within the context of their country, hence citizenship. This is one example of how schooling and educational policies were used to develop citizens in Africa after independence.

4.2.3 Education for "Kagisano" in Botswana

Botswana gained independence from the British Colonial rule in 1966 and inherited a poorly developed system of education. In 1976 the government of Botswana set up a National Commission on Education which was primarily to identify the problems in education and suggest alternative ways of improving the qualitative and quantitative aspects of education in Botswana (Tabulawa, 2003). The findings of the National Commission on Education were published in the Report of the National Commission on Education of 1977 which is popularly known as *Education for Kagisano:* Government paper No.1. The development of education in Botswana since 1977 has been directed by Education for *Kagisano* and this report has been accepted as the National Education Policy and laid the foundation and framework for education in Botswana.

The major aim of education in Botswana as articulated in Education for *Kagisano* (1977) is individual development. It further states that the focus of education in the school and classroom should be based upon the learners by " enabling them to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior that will give them a full successful life and continued personal growth; and equipping them with skills to participate effectively in a changing society" (Education for *Kagisano,* 1977, p.23). This goal for me is a clear indication of a commitment towards the development of a citizen who is equipped with knowledge, skills and values as well as being participative. The principles for the education system as laid down in Education for *Kagisano* (1977) revolved around promoting democracy, development of the population, promote self reliance, national unity and *Kagisano* (Social harmony). A critical analysis of the principles of education as laid down in Education for *Kagisano* (1977), it can be inferred that the policy was geared towards the development of citizenship as it is directed to the promotion of democracy, self reliance, national unity and social harmony which are essential attributes to nation-building and citizenship.

4.3 Language Policies

Some countries in Africa at independence adopted the use of English as a medium of instruction in schools even though other countries like Tanzania have maintained the use of

indigenous languages as a medium of instruction in schools. The discourse on education seems to be aligned to the use of English as a medium of instruction with very little consideration of its emergence and continued use as a hegemonic tool. In countries like South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, English has been adopted as a medium of instruction in schools, colleges, technikons and universities. The justification for the adoption of English as a medium of instruction has been its international importance particularly its use in international, technological and industrial communication (Nekhwevha, 1999). It is further argued that English remains the language of diplomacy and international commerce (Waghid, 2004). The use of English as a medium of instruction is viewed as a way of preparing citizens to fit into the global arena and the global market.

However, some critics have argued that the use of English in schools as a medium of instruction and as an official language is hegemonic in that its presence in the world today is a result of imperialism and colonialism (Brocke-Utne, 2001; Nekhwevha, 1999). One of the critics of the use of foreign languages is Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), in his classic works, *Decolonizing the mind*, when he argues about the effects of the cultural bomb and how it divorces people from their own cultures, language and identity. Given this scenario, it is imperative for us as Africans to re-examine our education systems and how they contribute to the development of citizens. One scholar is quick to remind us that "no country has ever achieved high levels of economic development where a large number of its citizens were compelled to communicate or learn in their second and/or third languages" (Nekhwevha, 1999, p. 503). Therefore, Africans have to critically examine their use of English as a medium of instruction in schools and resuscitate their indigeniety if they want to develop by using their vernacular languages to learn during the formative years of schooling.

4.4 Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IK's)

There is a growing trend among African nations to resuscitate their culture through refocusing their national philosophies. This has been done through the inclusion and emphasis of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IK's) in education more especially in countries like Botswana and South Africa. In Botswana education revolves around the five national principles of democracy, development, self reliance, unity and *Botho (Being humane)* which altogether form the national philosophy of *Kagisano (Social harmony)* (RNPE, 1994). Nekhwevha (1999) augments the notion of IK's that if Africans are to develop "good" citizens their curriculum should draw on the traditional African philosophy, and teach African histories because in the case of South Africa and Namibia history is in danger of disappearing. Indigenous Knowledge (IK) systems are defined as the knowledge, values, and practices of indigenous groups and are often synonymous with traditions in local communities and rarely considered universal (Kubow, 2007). The author further extols that IK's epistemological assumptions on reality are based on intuition, experience, inspiration, and revelation and that these knowledge systems developed in African societies are composed of particular orientations to life, ethics, human development, social relations, and institutions.

One example of an indigenous value system that is embodied in the African philosophy and demonstrated through practice is *Ubuntu (Botho)* which refers to moral issues of compassion, communalism, responsibility, patriotism and concern for the interests of the collective (Kubow, 2007; Schoeman, 2006). In simple terms *Ubuntu (Zulu)* or *Botho (Setswana)* has been added as one of the five national principles in Botswana and is also one of the tenets of the African culture. The Botswana government provides a working definition for *Botho* that:

"…the concept of a well rounded character, who is well-mannered, courteous and disciplined, and realizes his or her full potential both as an individual and as a part of the community to which she or he belongs" (Vision 2016, 1997, p.2). To further exemplify the notion of *Ubuntu,* Kubow (2007) uses a *Zulu* (language of an ethnic group in South Africa) adage that says "*Umuntu ngumentu ngabanto*" (a person is a person through other people) clearly showing that within the African context a person's humanity is defined through sociability and that no person will rest easily knowing that another person is in need. Indigenous knowledge is an important source of information among Africans as it provides useful information that is neither distorted nor foreign however, Africans themselves have been taught to devalue such knowledge. The argument is that western value systems that were imported from Europe during the colonial era have served to destroy and erode cultural values that were transmitted through informal and formal traditional schools and religions.

4.5 Africanization of the Social Studies Curriculum

Social studies provide knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes and values which enable the youth to be "good" citizens (Ajiboye, 2009; Merryfield, 1995). I argue that the development of a "good" citizen in Africa was done through the Africanization of the social studies curriculum. Africanization is defined in terms of an African-centered education that refers to "instruction that is developed from and centered on African peoples' experiences, thought, and environments" (Merryfield & Tlou, 1995, p. 2). This view was based on the premise that the curriculum had to be changed to reflect the views of the Africans as opposed to those of the colonizers. This Africanization of the social studies was done in different aspects of the curriculum which necessitated that the objectives, content, methods and resources or teaching materials be redirected to reflect the content and knowledge, values, attitudes and beliefs as well as the skills of the indigenous people it is supposed to serve. This called for reforms in the social studies curriculum more especially the syllabus to be Africanized.

Merryfield & Tlou (1995) in their study where they examined the primary social studies curriculum in Malawi, Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe found that most of these countries had revised their social studies curriculum to reflect their culture, language, literature and traditions. For example in Botswana the move towards Afro-centric social studies included among others developing a strong moral code of behavior that is compatible with the ethics and traditions of Botswana. In Kenya the social studies syllabus emphasized Kenya's economic development, cultural heritage, and National political unity as well as the knowledge and appreciation of their local communities and the nation as a whole. In Malawi more emphasis was put on teaching about Malawi and its neighbors as opposed to non-African content. In Nigeria, the Africanization of the social studies was noticed in that it concentrated on the local community, family, culture, health and economic well-being. This paradigm shift in terms of the curriculum was geared towards developing ideal citizens who are conversant with their immediate environment a situation that colonial education totally neglected.

4.6 Relevance to the National Needs

When African countries gained independence from their colonial masters they were faced with a mammoth task of nation building and education was seen as a transformative tool for development (Verspoor, 2008).This was a challenge in that they had inherited underdeveloped education systems with inadequate human resource capacity (Stampf, 1996). In addressing the issue of relevance, two divergent perspectives emerged; one based on the role of education as

transformative, liberating and empowering (Samoff, 1999). This view put emphasis on education helping students to understand their society in order to change and focus on innovation and experimentation. On the other end education was viewed as skills development and preparation for the world of work (Samoff, 1999). This view puts emphasis on providing students with skills to enable them to fit in the labor market.

Though the transformative view of education was seen to be empowering and liberating it remained a minority view. The second view became the dominant one as exemplified by education for self reliance in Tanzania and production brigades in Botswana. In this case education was seen as preparation for the world of work hence students were to be provided with skills that met the labor market needs within the society (Samoff, 1999). Since attaining independence, these African countries have undergone some grand metamorphosis to respond to the needs and realities of their nations. However, critics have argued that the notion of relevance to national needs has been construed narrowly in terms of improving the standard of living and the development of the nation's spiritual and material lives and this has led to schools limiting the learners' aspirations to develop strategies and tools for acquiring knowledge, generating ideas or crafting critiques hence rendering citizenship education an illusion rather than a reality.

5. Conclusion

Discerning from this discussion, there is no doubt that education or schooling has played a pivotal role in the development of citizenship among African nations in the post colonial era. There is also evidence to the fact that citizenship education is not new to the African continent, to the contrary, Africans have been made to believe that it is a western concept that is why there have been no attempts to re-conceptualize citizenship education in schools to take into account the socio-cultural aspects of these nations. Citizenship education continues to be taught from a Eurocentric perspective with little or no consideration of the recipients'' point of view. This view then calls for knowledge construction that is geared towards re-writing our histories, heritage and knowledge systems in order to reinstate our African identity. This paper serves as a reminder to all African nations to reinvent themselves, their histories, cultures and customs and calls for the African renaissance if indeed we aim to develop citizens ideal to Africa and the world.

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