AN ENHANCED HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY APPROACH TO EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY IN UGANDA

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By

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There are essential elements within the enhanced human development capability approach (EHDCA) which are: aspirations, human capabilities, human capital and human rights relate at the conceptual level. This study used the literature available on the four essential elements and finally contextualized the study to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy in Uganda using the EHDCA lens. The study explored and elaborated the normative conceptualization of EHDCA to education for human well-being. There has been a problem of not addressing the issue of an EHDCA in education systems. This is an urgent problem that needs attention.

This study argues that human capital and human rights constitute parts of human development capability approach (HDCA). There is also a strong notion of aspiration to make HDCA practical to solving problems of poverty, deprivation, unfreedoms and ignorance. Since the study was to see how the essential elements of the EHDCA interrelate, concepts used in EHDCA were defined to help readers understand the model suggested in this study. The final section is on the implications of the EHDCA to secondary education TVET policy in Uganda.

It is important to mobilize a person’s resources, aspirations, capabilities, expressed in agency, that lead to the enhancement of capability and aspiration sets to enable a person to achieve valued freedoms, which is the goal of EHDCA model. Human
capital and human rights approaches are not distinct but form part of the HDCA. The understanding of the essential elements of EHDCA helps us to conceptualize education especially among the deprived populations. The study brings in the understanding of the evolution of the concepts of aspirations and capabilities in the academic field. Finally, the study provides conceptual materials for partners in education to conceptualize education.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother Eugenia Tibenderana and late father Nyansio Tindamanyire, whose initial education and love have been a strong foundation for my accomplishment in life and the future I hope for.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

After more than a decade of reflecting on the idea of how education is to transform the lives of people in developing countries where the standard of living is very low, I have formed the conclusion that education in school has not contributed much to improve the well-being of people. People’s well-being could be economic, social or both. During this time of reflection, four areas of worth exploring further have emerged: (1) human capital; (2) human rights; (3) human capabilities; (4) the culture of aspiration. It is difficult for children and youth living in multiple deprived situations to construct and pursue their dreams and aspirations if they do not have the freedom to have the education they need to enhance their resources and capabilities and to choose a future that they have reason to value. From this perspective, education can only be relevant to children and youth if it addresses their (children and youth) capabilities and aspirations, and also ensure that notions of human capital and human rights are integrated within the education system. My goal in this work is to find out the interrelatedness of human capabilities, the culture of aspirations, human capital and human rights. The study aims at exploring how the human development capability approach can be enriched to promote better living conditions and well-being of people. Arjun Appadurai’s concept of aspiration as a navigational cultural capacity to future success will be used to study this relationship and supplemented with Caroline Sarojini Hart's study on aspiration, education and social justice, and Jay Macleod with his study on the Brothers (inner-city black boys) and Hallway Hangers (inner-city white boys) in Mississippi, United States.
Background of the Study

Children and youth from many developing countries continue to experience difficulty in accessing educational opportunities for success in life. While many of these young people do not have the opportunities of education from which to choose what they want to do, they have aspirations to better lives and well-being. Children and youth can pursue their dreams and aspirations comfortably provided institutions like family, schools, communities, governments and other partners in education can provide a good educational environment for people’s aspirations and capabilities. Education can be meaningful if all children and youth can be given an educational opportunity to have the ability to pursue options in life that make meaning to their lives. People do not just rise from nothing to achieve their dreams and aspirations; there are always opportunities those who succeed have over those who do not succeed. It is through these opportunities that patterns of achievement are made.¹

Developing world countries have the opportunity to rethink their educational systems to consider aspirations and capabilities of children and youth in their countries. However, they should also look into issues of human capital and human rights as integral parts of an empowering education system. The tendency has always been to approach education for the purpose of producing and reproducing the privileged elites in many countries. This could explain why many children and youth have been at a loss in their communities to have an education that could enable them to improve on their well-being.

and give children and youth an opportunity to be and do what they have reason to value in life. Governments and partners in education in countries where education has not yielded much in terms of empowering citizens could revisit their education systems and see whether they are still relevant to our constantly changing world. Education today seems to be more focused on the needs of the children of the elite, the well-off, and the children of civil servants. It is from this perspective that the EHDCA is suggested as one of the models that could enable all citizens to benefit by the countries’ education systems. This will not address only the issue of equal opportunity but also of young people’s aspirations and capabilities. Many children and youth have aspirations to improved incomes, good jobs, and other better things they think can improve their lives, yet the systems of education in their countries have not enabled them to achieve their aspirations and enhance what they are able to do and be. There still exist countries where children and youth, from elementary through secondary to university continue to study subject matter that is not related to their day-to-day life situations. It is a challenge for both developing and developed countries to find ways of improving their education systems so that whatever education people get can make a difference in people’s lives and help them to achieve their aspirations and capabilities and improve their well-being.

Contextualizing education is crucial in designing education policy. We have to recognize the fact that some people are poor in terms of wealth, some have no teachers,

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there are those who are sick, without food, illiterate, schools without infrastructure, and others have not had education at all. Unless the vulnerabilities are minimized, many young people will keep isolated from the rest of the population. It is from this background that I propose the EHDCA to education to address the issues of many children and youth that have not benefited from education systems in their countries. I think that EHDCA to education is more appropriate because it addresses what people are aspiring to in life, and what they are capable of being and doing within their contexts. However, there is need to keep in mind the availability of resources.

**Problem Statement**

In many countries, there is thinking about education from the perspective of human capital theory, whereby the intention is to develop qualities of people so that they can use their improved qualities to enhance economic productivity. The reality in many countries shows that this approach to education has not benefited all citizens because of their different environments and the availability of both personal and national resources. Many children and youth have not been able to access knowledge and skills that would enhance economic productivity. This has been attributed to factors such as gender insensitivity, insecurity, hunger, malnutrition, and undernourishment. With such conditions in many parts of the world especially the developing countries, people find it so hard to achieve their well-being. In addition, many children are not in school, others are illiterate, while others have dropped out of school, and there are those caught up in

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communities’ traditional values. All these isolate these children and youth from benefiting much from their education systems. Such contexts of multiple deprivations cannot successfully enable young people to improve their living conditions and well-being.⁶

Children and youth can only acquire skills and knowledge by having access to educational opportunities that would improve their capabilities and expand their life choices.⁷

The other constraints that many children and youth faced with education in their settings include high costs of education (personal tuition), low levels of school completion, insufficient and unsafe school facilities, poor quality education, inadequate public funding, irrelevant curriculum and in some countries decades of armed conflicts. These constraints contribute to the underperformance, high dropout rates and failure for children and youth to achieve their aspirations and enhance their capabilities.⁸ It is this kind of education that makes many young people powerless and vulnerable in societies where they live. This is the background for the search for and exploration of an enhanced human development capability approach model as an alternative approach to education

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that could help bring all children and youth on board to make sure they all benefit from the education systems in their countries.

People in societies have concerns, interests, aspirations and capabilities, which, many of the present systems of education have failed to integrate in their education policy design. \(^9\) Although there are many children and youth that live in deprived circumstances, they still deserve an education that can enable them to enhance their capabilities and expand their productive possibilities to be able to achieve the future they are aspiring to in their present time and in their future adulthood.

**Need for the Study**

Although there is a lot of research on aspirations, human capabilities, human capital, and human rights as separate concepts, there is little available on how these concepts interrelate to create a better education that could enable people to improve their well-being. Arjun Appadurai has contributed ground-breaking and well-known scholarship on aspirations, but his focus is on aspirations and specifically on poor people in India. \(^10\) Caroline Sarojini Hart followed his work with a study on aspirations and capabilities in the United Kingdom. \(^11\) Solava Ibrahim focused on poverty, aspirations and well-being in Egypt. \(^12\) There has been little work on aspirations related to basic

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\(^12\) Solava Ibrahim, “Poverty, aspirations and well-being: Afraid to aspire and unable to reach a better life-voices from Egypt,” *Brooks World Poverty Institute (BWPI) Working Paper* 141, 2011.
education, except Seeberg in China. Studies that explore people’s aspirations and capabilities especially in places that are dominated by rural populations have been few, and none have been conducted in Uganda. It is from that background that I find this study needed at this particular time in Uganda because it will contribute to the literature available on the subject. The study will not only stop at contributing to the existing literature on the concepts of aspirations, human capabilities, human capital and human rights but also applying the understanding of these concepts to technical vocational education and training, particularly in the context of secondary education.

**Thesis Statement**

This dissertation adopted the critique forwarded by Malbub ul Haq and Amartya Sen of human capital approach to development. They critique the approach to development that focuses only on the productive capacity of human manpower, and on improving the workforce and not the well-being of the human beings that do the work. I suggest that the EHDCA model provides a better framework for conceptualizing education that will take into account the human capabilities, the culture of aspirations, human capital and human rights of human beings and their well-being in their respective countries. EHDCA model can help to design and reform education systems that can empower all citizens to improve their living conditions and quality of life. The implications of EHDCA to the formation of education policy are more elaborated in chapters four and five of this inquiry.

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Education needs to go beyond economic growth and passing standardized tests to providing students with opportunities, options; what they are in position of doing or being so that each and every learner can achieve his/her own potential. Human opportunities and the freedom to access those opportunities need to be at the center of any education policy design or reform.\textsuperscript{15} The education approach for human well-being demands a collaborative effort from different education partners (such as parents, schools, religious institutions, communities and governments) to work together to ensure that they design education systems that would form people’s existing capacities into developed internal capabilities of different kinds. It is by developing these internal capabilities that individuals are able to exercise other human capabilities.\textsuperscript{16}

In countries where education systems are not yielding the expected outcomes, it is worthwhile for their governments and policy-makers and all partners to rethink of the relationship between their education systems and their processes of change and development that have come as a result of those education systems. If the desired outcomes have not been met by the available education systems, then new education designs or reforms have to replace the actual education policies or reforms. There is always a need for countries to review what they had set as goals to be achieved by their education system. If their education system is not working, then, they need to change their strategies so that they can have a system that will address their goals more


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, p. 152.
effectively. It is with this rationale in mind that I chose to begin the analysis in this dissertation with the dominant approaches to education.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this dissertation inquiry is, first of all, to take up an exploration of the human capital and human rights-based approaches to education and how they are reflected in the human development capability approach (HDCA). The study goes on to explore and further elaborate the normative conceptualization of EHDCA to education for human well-being, which is the central goal of development. Finally, the study looks into the implications of the EHDCA to Secondary technical and vocational education in Uganda.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

Chapter one provides the introduction of the study and includes the background of the study, problem statement, need for the study, thesis statement, purpose statement, organization of the dissertation, research questions, design of the study, contribution to education and definition of terms. The focus in chapter two is on the three dominant approaches to education in the contemporary world, and how two of them, that is, human capital and human rights-based are reflected in the human development capability approach (HDCA). The last section of chapter two looks at multilateral organizations such as IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization and international

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18 Some scholars who call human capital, human rights-based and human development capability approach as the dominant approaches to education include: Leon Tikly and Angeline M. Barrett in their article “Social Justice, Capabilities and the Quality of Education in Low Income Countries.”
Nongovernmental agencies such as CARE International, PLAN International, and World Vision International and Oxfam to see whether they practice human capital, human rights-based or human development capability approach to education. Chapter three explores the interrelatedness of aspirations and HDCA. The first section of chapter three addresses the issue of aspirations. The study of aspirations includes areas such as: definition of aspiration, nature of aspiration, terminologies in aspirations and aspiration as a cultural capacity. The second section is on the capability approach. This section of capabilities begins with the fundamental concepts within the human development capability approach. These are concepts such as development, human development, capability/capabilities, functionings, freedom, agency and well-being. The understanding of the concepts in this study is crucial to understanding better the interrelatedness of the human development capability approach and aspirations and to be able to see the contribution they can make in the improvement of human development in developing countries. This same section also looks into the two different versions of capability approach, Amartya Sen’s version and Martha C. Nussbaum’s version. Section two ends with relating capabilities with education, and this looks mainly at Elaine Unterhalter and Melanie Walker and how they explicate the capability approach in education. The final section of chapter three elaborates the linkage between aspirations, human capabilities, human capital and human rights. It is from this linkage or interrelatedness that the EHDCA model is born. The fourth chapter addresses the implications of the EHDCA model to TVET policy in Ugandan secondary schools. Chapter Five is the conclusion and
the implications of the EHDCA to education policy and its evaluation. It is this model that will be my contribution to the field of Comparative International Education.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to explore how the addition of the concept of aspiration would strengthen or is a necessary added component to the capability approach to human development, within Technical and vocational education and training in Ugandan secondary schools.

1. What is the relationship of the dominant development models and the capability approach?
2. How does an understanding of aspiration and human capabilities inclusive of notions of human capital and human rights help us to conceptualize education?
3. How can we use the EHDCA model for formulating TVET Policy in Uganda?

**Design of the Study**

In approaching this study, the inquirer used a descriptive conceptual analysis. This was done by using the existing relevant literature to respond to the three questions addressed in this study. Descriptive conceptual analysis was a better option because it offers a more detailed description of the concepts being studied, and it also helps readers to know the central idea or concept of what is being studied.\(^{19}\) Descriptive conceptual analysis is crucial in this study by the fact that it can help in unpacking concepts\(^{20}\) such as

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\(^{19}\) Anonymous, “Types of Analysis: Outline on Types of Analysis,” accessed on February 13\(^{th}\), 2014, from www.2.uvawise.edu/pwww8y/.../TypesAnalysis/00TypesAnalysis.htm.

aspirations and capabilities that are essential elements of the EHDCA model that is suggested in this study. Models, frameworks or theories are made of interacted concepts that when well-defined can be instrumental in formulating and implementing those models, frameworks or theories. The analysis in this context is looking at ideas of education practitioners and researchers who have done a deep conceptualization of aspirations, capabilities, human capital and human rights and how they can be strong instruments for human development education.²¹

Descriptive conceptual analysis of concepts such as human capital, human rights, human development, aspirations, and capabilities enable us to understand these concepts and how they interrelate in formulating an education policy design or reform that can empower all citizens in society.

This meant that the study had to look for data from the literature related to the issues being studied, which include: three dominant approaches to development, aspirations, capabilities, human development, capability approach, technical vocational education and training, and multilateral agencies. Literature across disciplines was consulted to see how it could throw more light especially on the concepts of aspirations and on the capability approach. It is this type of study (descriptive conceptual analysis) that can facilitate the process of getting a better understanding or a deeper description of the concepts that are a focus of the study.

The first research question is about the relationship of the dominant development models and the capability approach. This study reviews dominant approaches to development education in order to form conclusions that are most appropriate and crucial in formulating an education policy design or reform that can empower citizens in a given society. Education without goals is like playing soccer without goal posts.

There are several approaches to education but this study will focus on human development capability approach in which I argue that the human capital and human rights-based are reflected. The second question asks how aspiration, human capabilities and notions of human capital and human rights can help us to conceptualize education. In answering the second question, the study makes a descriptive analysis of the concepts aspirations and capabilities based on literature review so as to understand the freedom people have to develop their capabilities and in making choices to pursue the future they have reason to value. Then the study finally brings in the notions of human capital and human rights to complement aspirations and capabilities. This provides the conceptual space to explore the notion that education can be made relevant and useful to people in society if there is an integration of aspirations, human capabilities, human capital and human rights in educational policy formation. It is this integration of these four elements that I call an EHDCA model. The third research question looks into the implications of the EHDCA model to secondary education TVET policy in Uganda. The study of the implications of the EHDCA study is based on literature and personal reflections and experiences in education in Uganda.
Contributions of this Research

My contribution in this study is that I do not end at making the distinctiveness of the development models, as does Amartya Sen, Melanie and Elaine Unterhalter, but first of all bring in a new idea that human capital and human rights are part of the Human Development Capability Approach. The other contribution I make is that the understanding of aspirations and human capabilities inclusive of the notions of human capital and human rights helps us to conceptualize education especially among deprived populations. This study also brings in an understanding of the evolution of the concepts of aspirations and capabilities in the academic field. Finally, the study provides conceptual materials for partners in education to conceptualize education.

Definition of Terms

The definitions have been extracted from the Sen’s Capability approach. These are not necessarily the generally accepted definitions, but those used in this dissertation.

Development: A process that enables people to live the lives they have reason to value.

Human Development: Locating human beings at the center of human progress and development.

Capability/capabilities: The opportunities or freedoms people have to do and be different things.

Freedom: When people have no constraints to stop them from achieving what they value or the capability for people to live the lives they value.
**Well-being:** Composed of functionings like being well-nourished, being well-sheltered, being healthy, living in a secure environment, as well as intangibles such as pleasure, fulfillment.

**Functionings:** Those activities or states of being that constitute people’s capabilities.

**Agency:** The ability to pursue goals that one values and has reason to value.

**Aspiration:** Ability to set goals for the future while maintaining the inspiration in the present to reach those goals (Russell Quaglia and Casey Cobb, 1996).
CHAPTER 2
THE HUMAN CAPITAL AND RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES TO EDUCATION AND HOW THEY ARE REFLECTED IN THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY APPROACH

People across the globe have a lot of confidence in education because they believe that once they have received it, life will be better than before. This is the reason why people in both developed and developing countries are willing to spend a lot on their children to make sure that they can learn what can help them easily navigate through life. Although people have traditionally recommended each and every child to get an education, the question of the purpose for education is not clear in many communities. This is why people like Noddings suggest that there is always need for continual and reflective engagement on the aims of education because aims of education change with time.22 It is within this context that the study begins by reviewing the dominant approaches (human capital, human rights-based and human capability) to development education that are fundamental not only in bringing out the purposes which education is meant to serve, but also in formulating an education policy design or reform that empowers all citizens in society. Although this chapter looks at the literature review of other dominant approaches to education (human capital and human rights-based), the focus is mainly on human development capability in which I argue that the other two are reflected. The study of these different approaches could give partners in education a

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22 Nel Noddings, Happiness and Education, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 76.
better understanding not only of these educational approaches, but also by helping them know why they should be conscious of the purposes of educational policies.

After the analysis of the reflection of the human capital and human rights-based approaches in the human development capability approach, the latter will be further developed by exploring the capacity to aspire as an element in education policy design.

There is need today in many countries approaches to education that can address the needs and concerns of all their citizens. It would seem that research and numerous UNESCO conferences would convince governments and policy-makers of the need to provide an education that would enable their citizens to live what they categorize as better lives. Problems of equal access to education have been identified in compelling numbers of research studies which show that there are populations within countries that are disadvantaged because they do not have access to information, education, skills, media, schooling and even some lack confidence. Such deprivations in the lives of many children and youth make it difficult for them to achieve their goals in life. Since most of these problems persist in all education literature internationally, it can be a good starting point to rethink educational policy for education reformers and policy makers in many countries where education systems seem to be disconnected with the real life of the populations.

In the context of the 21st century UNESCO resolutions on Education for All, the presence of out of school children, school dropouts, physically challenged children,

orphans, unemployment, children in armed conflict regions, and those in the post conflict regions need an education that gives every student an opportunity to have an education that will help him or her to navigate through life. The argument in this section is that it requires an education approach that goes beyond planning for the economic outcomes of education to issues of equity, quality and relevance. This study is limited to exploring the two dominant approaches in development education, the human capital, the human rights-based and the emerging human capability normative approaches to education. This dissertation argues that these approaches enrich the aspirations-capability model that I suggest for countries in their education policy designs and reforms. The implications of the aspirations-capability approach model for policy and practice for secondary school technical and vocational education and training in Uganda will be explored in the final chapter.

**Human Capital Development Approach to Education and its Reflection in the Human Development Capability Approach to Education**

Human capital theory is one of the normative models for education policy. There is a general understanding today that the requirements of workers in the past in terms of knowledge, skills and information can no longer hold in today’s fast-changing world. The assumption is that once people have gone through education or training, they will increase their productive capacities. It is an approach to education that has attracted education policy makers in many countries since the mid-20th century. This approach to education calls upon education policy makers, reformers, and policy implementers to find

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up-to-date forms of organizing the teaching and learning processes in educational institutions so that children and youth can become more productive in society and contribute to economic growth of the nation. The focus of human capital theory approach to education is on the creative capacity of workers in production, and the quality of what they produce and not so much on the well-being of the workers.25

It is important to note that the human capital approach to education was developed in the 1960s by scholars in the University of Chicago. The main objective of the originators of human capital approach was to find a way of quantifying the contribution education made on people’s earning power, financial independence and its contribution to productivity. The question what is the social return to education came to dominate the discussion over the question of the private return,26 as is evident in the Nobel Prize address by one of the fathers of modern economics, Theodore Schultz, “Education accounts for much of the improvement in population quality”.27 This perception of the value of education has continued to dominate the world especially in countries that are influenced by western ideologies of labor markets and capitalism.28 The same perception held sway in socialist countries under the policy heading of “manpower planning” as amply demonstrated by Seeberg in her study of socialist China’s early

The notion is that when children and youth go to school, they should be able to acquire certain qualities that can be instrumental in enhancing economic productivity in their own countries. This means that when education policy makers and governments in nations design education policies using the lens of human capital approach, their main concern is the economic value of education. This implies that the value of any kind of education depends on the economic outcomes it yields for the people and country. From this perspective, education policies and reforms have the main goal as improving the productive capacity of people in that country. It means that from the planning stage, through the implementation stage, to the outcomes, the focus is on increasing people’s productive capacities in terms of quality and quantity. The reasoning from this perspective is that the more advanced a country’s human capital, the more chances for growth in that country’s national development. This can lead us to conclude that the whole purpose of education is to improve the productive capacity of the nations’ populations.

Countries cannot do much to improve the productive capacity of their populations when their education systems are elitist and suffer from other intervening factors. In addition, the curricula of many countries do not respond to the competitive

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29 Seeberg, op.cit.
factor markets. Literature reveals that students from primary/elementary to University acquire few skills and knowledge to exploit opportunities in the job market, hence leading to high unemployment especially among the young population. This is particularly true as occupations become highly specialized. This situation implies that policy makers have done little to create a linkage between education and human capital development. The absence of a linkage between education and human capital development makes it difficult for many people and their countries to realize their potential. Governments, policy makers and education reformers in nations need to always be conscious of the fact that people cannot realize their potential because of the failure to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to raise their living standards and reduce poverty.

The challenge is that in many countries, there are always some sections of the population who do not have enough resources to establish education systems that can enable them advance their human capital to the level of those with resources. Some of the challenges they meet include: poor infrastructure, traditional cultural values, attitudes, and practices and poverty. It is difficult to enhance human capital among people before dealing with the many deprivations that the people experience in their environments.

The reality is; as a country looks for ways to improve both their social and economic development, there is need for people to accumulate human capital and also


expand human capability. Human capital plays an important role in the economic growth of countries, which also create opportunities that can help to expand people’s capabilities to lead freer and more worthwhile lives. Human capital addresses issues such as individual’s abilities, knowledge, skills, and motives. These form part of what is needed for the well-being in the human development capability approach. In the world today, people cannot avoid the human capital lens in looking at educational issues because it focuses on the agency of human beings in nations through skills, knowledge, and competencies that enhance people’s productive possibilities. However, research shows that the value of human capital is not only determined by the level of one’s education but also the abilities that one has been endowed with from birth. This means that looking into combining education and individual ability would not only be a big asset in education for human productivity but also human capability expansion.

This study does not underestimate the role played by the human capital approach to education, but sets up to show that economic growth and individual incomes are important because they are the means to expand people’s freedom in society. However, the study emphasizes the fact that they should not be viewed as ends in themselves but as means to enrich human well-being. The reality remains that human capital and human development capability approach are connected because they are both concerned with enhancing human capabilities. Human capital enhances human beings’ resources in terms of skills and knowledge that can be applied in productive endeavors, while human

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development of capability focuses on enhancing the freedoms of people so that they can live the kinds of life the value.\textsuperscript{37} This interdependence is something that education policy makers and reformers could capitalize on to design an education that will address issues of growth and equality in societies.

It is in order for people to use education to increase the productivity of human power in their countries. However, education systems in many countries need to address the issue of inequality in terms of gender, rural/urban relation, and geographical location. It is when these inequalities are addressed that the standards of human workforce and productivity can be improved. If the problem of inequality is not addressed, many children and youth will continue to be discriminated against in countries’ educational processes, and will therefore not be able to achieve their potential.\textsuperscript{38} I will explain below why I argue that supplementing human capital with human development capability approach would help in handling some of the human capital approaches’ limitations.

The misconception by many governments and their policy makers that economic growth of the gross national product will always trickle down to raise income per capita of all their citizens like a rising tide in terms of advantages such as jobs, economic opportunities, and social benefits has disappointed many people in those countries. It has become more evident that human capital as an approach to education cannot work in isolation; it needs supplements from other approaches like the human right-based and human development capability to be able to address the needs and concerns of citizens

\textsuperscript{37} Amartya Sen, “\textit{Human Capital and Human Capability},” op.cit. 1959.
from a wide perspective. By the fact that an increase in economic growth of a country does not necessarily improve the lives of the people in that particular country, then there is a need to question the human capital approach, and think of the alternative approach or of borrowing some elements from other approaches that would supplement the human capital approach.  

It is evident that human capital approach is concerned with the economic benefit and productivity of some people and not others. This is why human capital approach needs to be supplemented by other approaches so that the policy put in place can address the needs, concerns and interests of countries’ populations through education. Human capital approach has had a great influence on education and development in many countries but it is also important to question this approach to education and see whether countries can minimize its limitations to ensure that all people benefit by their education systems in their countries. Unfortunately, despite its limitations, and especially in failing to make education policy inclusive, the same approach has been institutionalized in programs such as the Dakar Education for All. My argument here is that approaches such as human development capability and social justice can be of value to countries and education policy makers who hold that human beings and their well-being should be the central concern of policy

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41 Tikly and Barrett, op.cit., 5.
Critique of Human Capital Approach from the HDCA Perspective

For those countries which choose to use the human capital approach to education, their focus is on the attributes of their citizens that can enable them to be more productive in the macro-economic context. This approach to education is less concerned with social returns and intrinsic value that people can acquire from the education process, and so do not include them in their education policies and reforms.\(^{42}\) There is an urgent need today whereby many people in countries express their need of education systems that are not only going to benefit them in terms of jobs and productivity, but above all the education systems that will enrich their lives.\(^{43}\) From this perspective, the human capital approach to education is part of human development capability approach since it aims at enhancing capabilities in terms of knowledge and skills so that people can improve economic productivity. However, HDCA goes beyond to see that what people earn in terms of income is translated into their well-being.\(^{44}\)

Human Rights-Based Approach to Education and its Reflection in the Human Development Capability Approach to Education

In designing education policies and formulating education reforms, countries need to recognize the instrumental role human rights-based approaches can play in promoting economic growth and human well-being.\(^{45}\) Since this section aims at showing how human rights-based approach is reflected in the human development capability approach,

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it is important that this inquiry brings out certain common principles of human rights-based approaches that are engrained within the human development capability approach. The examples of these common principles in the human rights-based approach are accountability, participation, nondiscrimination and empowerment. These are indeed the typical concerns of the human development capability approach to education. Wherever there are populations that are vulnerable because of their gender, economic status, geographical location, ethnic group vulnerabilities of other forms, the human rights-based approach to education brings in the principles that can help in making education inclusive so that all citizens in their countries are able to have access to the benefits education systems offer.

**Rights-Based Approach Explication**

The rights-based approach to education is concerned with justice by taking education as a universal entitlement for all human beings regardless of who they are, where they live, and what they do. This is used as a way to tackle the inequalities and deprivations experienced by vulnerable groups in society. Since every society has got people that are vulnerable in different ways, it would be important that education policy designers and reformers ensure that they also consider ways through which vulnerable groups can gain from the education policy designed. ⁴⁶

Human Rights-based theorists argue that developmental processes have to be built on the foundation of human rights. They advocate for an education policy that puts into consideration what people hold as being valuable and making sure that the inequalities in

⁴⁶ Wang, op.cit. 415.
terms of class, gender, race and ethnicity are minimized. Using the lens of human rights-based approach to education, governments in different countries are called upon to respect the right to education of every child, and also to provide a free and compulsory education at primary and secondary level. The purpose of education for the human rights-based theorists is to promote the development of every individual, and to strengthen people’s rights and freedoms, so that all citizens are able to participate in a free society. From this perspective, the human rights-based approach to education portrays a strong sense of human dignity among all people.

The right to education among the poor populations of the world can make a big change because many children and youth who do not get access to education can have the opportunity to go to school or other institutions of learning. At times what is needed are the resources that can enable people to have not only access to education but also a good quality education. This is where governments can be of much help if they take up the responsibility of funding educational institutions. The presence of many children and youth who do not have access to education is an indicator that some education systems across the globe are discriminatory, and it is only through free education and government funding that the marginalized and disadvantaged children can have access to education. The other issue that has to be put into consideration is the fact that the right to education works hand in hand with other rights such as the right to be respected, having relevant

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education, having access to a good quality education, a right to professional teachers, a right to a secure place, a right to an education that is culturally appropriate and making sure that people have a right to an education that is adaptable to the changing needs of society.\textsuperscript{50}

The advantage with the human rights-based approach to education is that it creates a friendly environment for many people in educational institutions who are discriminated and marginalized because of their gender, ethnic group, region or religion. Children and youth, usually fill secure in an educational environment that respects human rights. With a friendly environment, children and youth will feel that they are respected, protected and cared for. It is within this kind of environment that young people will appreciate the education system as designed to make sure that they all benefit from the system without being segregated. In addition, human rights-based approach to education can also address countries’ issues of content, process and the outcomes of education,\textsuperscript{51} which if not well addressed can limit the chances of many children and youth to enhance their capabilities and be able to live the life they want to live.

The human rights-based education tends to be more attractive to some groups of people, governments and individuals because of its emphasis on the role of the state in ensuring that people’s basic rights are guaranteed. United Nations through the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has made an effort to work with governments to provide educational opportunities to children in some countries where children still face

\textsuperscript{50}Katarina Tomasevski, Education and the 4As. RIGHT TO EDUCATION project. Retrieved from http://www.right-to-education.org/nod/226.  
\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., 4-10.
many obstacles to benefit by the available education systems. The human rights-based approach to education is very crucial for governments which are seeking to improve their education systems because it looks at human development from a wider perspective (economic, political and cultural). There are many children and youth in many countries, who are constantly being abused and are not protected, others whose learning creativity has not been given an opportunity to participate in the democratic processes and debates that make decisions that affect their lives. These are very important issues that can be addressed by applying the human rights-based approach to education.\(^\text{52}\) In embracing education policy design using the human rights-based approach, partners in education in any country need to be conscious of the fact that it is always a challenge in many countries, especially in the developing countries to realize the suggested human rights. This has led to scholars like Ingrid Robeyns to conclude that human rights-based approach to education is mere rhetoric simply because many countries have subscribed to international treaties and conventions but they do not respect their commitment to those treaties and conventions on human rights.\(^\text{53}\) The other challenge of the human rights-based approach to education is that some governments have signed these treaties and conventions on human rights as just a formality and not something that they should abide with. By the fact that many countries do not fulfill their responsibility to implement the conventions and declarations to which they have alleged to fulfill, it means that by using


the human rights-based approach to education, many children and youth have been left out and will continue to be left out because of the failure of governments and all those entrusted with power to respect the rights of children to a good education and other rights that go with it. This is one of the reasons why some children and youth still fail to benefit by the available education. There are many countries which have legally granted their children and youth the right to education, and yet, there are still many children in these countries without education. This confirms the fact that it is not a guarantee that when governments give the right to education to children that they fulfill that responsibility.

The situation in many countries is that it is easier for governments to talk about human rights than to put into practice what human rights demand of them. Robeyns makes a sound argument in this regard, when she says that international agencies like the United Nations make their great declarations in terms of rights but in the final analysis nobody knows who is to do what in the implementation phase. Many of the international conventions and declarations are well-intended to enable all young people to have access to a good quality education, and yet, many of these signed conventions and declarations do not yield the intended outcomes.54

Human rights-based approach to education is not only beneficial for individual well-being, but also for the well-being of the nations. Nations can use a human rights-based approach to education to enhance people’s capabilities so that each and every body in the country can become productive and be able to contribute to his/her well-being and

the well-being of his/her nation.\textsuperscript{55} Citizens cannot have access to a good quality education unless governments and policy makers value education as a right to every citizen. If countries value education as a right, they will take it upon themselves to make sure that they provide education to all citizens despite their differences. There are many countries in the world today where leaders and their subjects do not value human rights and have left the whole burden to international agencies to be the ones to ensure that people’s right to education is respected. These countries sign documents for safeguarding human rights and yet they do not commit themselves to keeping those agreements. Although human rights are well articulated in the Universal Declarations of Human Rights as per 1948, there is still a big challenge to have member countries commit themselves to what is in that declaration and the international conventions that have come after.\textsuperscript{56}

**Human Rights Based and Human Development Capability Approach Convergence**

The relationship between human rights declarations and their implementation can make more sense if they are seen within the context of human development capability approach. This could be the reason why people like Amartya Sen have made a distinction between rights as legally instituted by national legislation or international convention, and human rights that are based on the ‘humanity’ or ‘human-ness’ of the people who are

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 75.

involved. It is when people look at the human-ness of their fellow human beings as a value that respecting human rights will make sense. The issues of abusing others, depriving them of certain benefits, and not caring to empower them so that they can come out of their deprived situations is all a consequence of how they perceive their fellow human beings. This is why one could argue that human rights-based approach is incomplete if governments and other partners in education do not interrelate human rights and human development. We can say it differently that human rights-based approach is incomplete if it is not seen within the context of human development capability approach.

Governments across the world can also take up Martha Nussbaum’s idea that rights-based approach to education can be instrumental if governments and international agencies can engage people in the discussion on human rights. Nussbaum’s argument brings to our attention the fact that we cannot expect people to use human rights-based approach if they do not know whether they have the rights that can enable them to pursue what they want to achieve in life. Citizens also need to know whether they have the rights to opportunities and capacities that they can use to make choices that affect their life. These are capabilities that all citizens in countries need to have integrated in their education systems. These capabilities will facilitate their education towards achieving what they expect from their education systems.

In countries with good systems of governance, human rights-based approach to education has got an important role to play because it is the way through which

governments can commit themselves to educate all children in these countries without exception. However, education policy makers and reformers need always to pay attention to the marginalized or discriminated groups in such societies simply because they tend to be neglected because of their ethnic groups, race, geographical locations, disabilities and social and economic background. As we look into the issues of development through education, the diversity of all children and youth with different human abilities should be used to inform the education policy making process to make sure that every child gets a good education he/she deserves.59

There is need to recognize the right to education as a fundamental right that individuals can use to secure other human rights. Unfortunately, this is a right that is usually violated in many parts of the world. The situation in many countries shows that there are still many children who are not at school because of the many costs to be covered in educational institutions. The worst victims of high educational costs are children from deprived environments. This situation may be persisting because nations have theoretical frameworks to guide them, but they do not put them into practice, and at times there is no political will to achieve the right to education of all citizens. This puts many children and youth from deprived families and communities in a perpetual state of vulnerability. The main task in this arrangement is on how countries can find ways to hold their governments accountable for the right to education of every citizen. One way through which countries’ populations could hold their governments accountable for

depriving children of their right to education is by having children’s right to education and other related rights well-defined in the national constitutions. The assumption here is that governments respect what is outlined in their constitutions, and that they will commit themselves to respecting children’s right to education if it is in the constitution. The challenge is that many people lack the capability of knowing what the constitution says about education. It is indeed impossible for many citizens to defend what they do not know. The other obstacle to the right to education in the constitution is that many countries still have a large percentage of its population illiterate.60

Partners in education need to know that in case the national constitutions fail to protect their children and youth’s rights to education, the deprived populations can raise the issue to the national legislature where they can ask the legislators to pass children’s rights into law. The deprived groups and the advocates for the right to education have to make sure that issues of gender, disabilities, socioeconomic status, ethnic groups, regions and religions are all addressed in the law suggested to the legislature. This also demands that people have the knowledge of the legislations passed by parliament into laws. This serves a good purpose if people are able to read and understand the elements within the laws that protect children’s right to education so that they are able to hold the government accountable. In this case, the parliaments would take it on themselves to make sure that governments respect their commitments to the right to education of all children because the right to education is enacted in governments’ laws. The challenge may come in when

the parliamentarians themselves lack the ability to interpret laws that relate to the right to education of children. Some laws demand serious reflection on the side of the parliamentarians, especially when the right to education is implied indirectly. Some laws demand serious reflection on the side of the parliamentarians, especially when the right to education is implied indirectly. Unfortunately, not all parliamentarians may be endowed with that ability to see both the direct and indirect implications of laws. Governments, parliaments and the citizens must work together to find out the kinds of children that are benefiting from the education system and those who are not benefiting so that they can find a remedy to help them develop their potential. This necessitates that governments and education policy makers in nations consider the victims of education systems who usually include girls, disabled children, children of migrant workers, pastoralist children, children from low socioeconomic status families, and ethnic or linguistic minorities. It is only where a legal framework is put in place with commitment from the government to implement the laws that these marginalized children can have their right to education respected. The citizens must be able to clearly prove to their governments that their children have been deprived of their right to education because of who they are. Citizens can protect the right to education of deprived populations by establishing ways through which people can be informed about laws on children’s rights to education so that they can challenge the prevailing injustices in the education systems and protect their children’s rights.  

61 Ibid.
Human Rights International Conventions

Another way that is suggested to protect the right to education of children and youth is the one of going beyond the national laws to international and regional treaties and conventions. The international and regional laws in some cases tend to have more influence on national governments than the national laws. It is through such international and regional treaties and conventions that national governments and partners in education can be put on pressure to respect the right to education of every child. These law enforcers have got a strong voice that can at times challenge the voice of national governments on the respect to children’s rights.\textsuperscript{62} A typical example of this arrangement is the European Union and the Bologna Agreements, albeit though they deal with higher education, their effort to enable European citizens acquire the competencies they need to face the challenges of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century and becoming aware of their shared social and cultural space have been instrumental to European Union member countries. Member countries of the European Union have been encouraged to promote democratic values in their countries. These values include: improving the quality of education, efficiency, social mobility, social cohesion, equity and active citizenship.\textsuperscript{63} Human rights-based approach to education can be instrumental as long as governments, parliaments, and all citizens are aware on how to use these legal instruments to enable all children to have their right to education and other rights that are contained in the right to education.\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} The Bologna Declaration of 19\textsuperscript{th} June, 1999.
\textsuperscript{64} Archer, op.cit. 7-8.
Critique of Human Rights Based Approach

The strongest criticism against human rights-based approach to education is its universality. There are people who think that human rights cannot be universalized since they are deeply rooted in western liberal thought. This has been a position of the developing countries. They believe it is a western ideology meant to impose western values on developing nations. This is believed to be the reason why some nations have been reluctant to commit themselves to the United Nations’ declarations and conventions on human rights. Human right in many parts of the world have been visualized as a way to subject people from the developing world to western cultures, values and ensuring that all the other cultural values are put aside. This makes many people from the developing world skeptic of the role human rights can play in influencing education policies and reforms in the developing world.⁶⁵

Sen also sees human rights as very important in society because they can be perceived as rights to people’s particular capabilities. However, he puts into question the universalist approach (application of human rights to all people across the globe) to human rights since we live in a world where our cultures differ from one society or community to another, and our preoccupations are also diverse. The similarity that Sen sees between human rights and capabilities is that both have to be arrived at through the process of public reasoning. He does not borrow the idea that human rights are universal because the diversity among people calls for public reasoning so that individuals or groups or countries or any other entities come together and find out what they consider to

⁶⁵ Manion and Menashy, op.cit. 229.
be human rights for them. He obviously respects the human rights role in addressing issues of opportunity and process which he sees as two valued aspects of freedom.\textsuperscript{66}

The other challenge is the fact that the conceptualization and practice of human rights vary across societies, and this becomes a big challenge especially when it comes to international conventions. There is, at times a conflict of whose version of human rights should be accommodated in the international declarations/conventions of human rights. The world is made up of countries with different value systems, which means that each country may have to emphasize certain values in its education system. In addition, people in different parts of the world do not live in the same context, and that may require that they approach the right to education from different perspectives because of their different cultures, traditions and historical and sociological development. This makes the whole process of universalizing the right to education very difficult to implement.\textsuperscript{67}

As governments across the world make efforts to reform and redesign their education policies, there is need to conceptualize human rights in order to address the serious problem of deprivations across the globe. Sen makes an important argument which could be a good beginning for conceptualizing human rights, especially from the educational perspective. He argues that people need to reason seriously to arrive at a concept of human rights that will be more respected and meaningful to them. Sen argues that it is not the legality of human rights and their dependency on international legislation

that matters but the humanness involved in those conventions and declarations. This is why Sen recommends that human rights should not be seen in terms of their legality but in terms of social ethics and public reasoning.68 I think that one could easily argue with Sen, who is a subjectivist in the discussion on human rights, that human beings have human nature in common, which could at times lead them to having the same value system on certain things.

The study of both human capital and human rights-based approaches has shown that they have many good elements like helping individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, access to education and good quality education to make sure that all individuals in society get the opportunity that can help them to achieve what they want in life. But none of the two approaches has human development as the main purpose for education. This is what the human development capability approach to education does. The next section will not only explain what the human development capability approach is, but it will also demonstrate how the previous mentioned dominant approaches to education (human capital and human rights-based) are reflected within the human development capability approach.

**The Human Development Capability Approach to Education**

The human development capability approach is the one I recommend as an approach to education because of its focus on individual advantages in terms of opportunity. Unlike human capital and human rights-based approaches to education, the

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human development capability approach to education looks to the expansion of human capabilities of all members of society. In this case, it means that governments and education policy makers have got to look at what children and youth are able to do so that they can design their education systems in relation to young people’s capabilities. This approach puts much emphasis on human life and not just income and commodities that individual citizens possess.\footnote{Amartya Sen, \textit{The Idea of Justice} (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 231-233.} This normative approach to education is very crucial for governments and education policy designers and reformers because it is more focused on the core principles of human freedom and well-being. This approach to education does not only focus on resources but also on the opportunities that people have to live the kinds of lives they value. The advantage of this approach to education is that it is so comprehensive and multi-dimensional, and it is not only interested in economic instrumental role of education, but also in the non-economic instrumental and constitutive roles of education. From the perspective of human development capability approach, governments and policy makers have to evaluate and assess individual well-being within a community or country. They should also look at whether the social arrangements create an atmosphere that is favorable for promoting people’s well-being. The approach to education is unique because of its evaluative processes that focus on different aspects of well-being such as inequality, poverty and the well-being of either the individual or members of a group.\footnote{Robeyns, “Three Models of Education: Rights, Capabilities and Human Capital,” op.cit. 78.}
Human Development Capability Approach Explication

If countries are looking to an education that can lead to development, then the conceptualization of development should go beyond economics to cover the social, cultural and political fields. Within the context of human development capability approach to education, the aim of education is to improve the lives of people in their countries. Education in a country can be considered developmental, if people consuming that education are progressively and regularly improving their well-being. If governments are interested in designing education policies that will enhance human development among their citizens, they must bring all partners in education on board so that they are all involved in the decision-making process and also participate in deciding on what they think will improve their well-being. Once we begin talking of development in terms of participation and equitable distribution of benefits, then, we find ourselves in need of human rights as instruments to ensure participation and distribution of benefits to all people. Within this context, the central role is to promote human well-being, and rights come in to define and defend this human well-being.71

Education and development have been a major concern for many countries around the globe. Since development is about improving people’s well-being, then, governments’ concern, from this perspective is to see how they can design education systems or make education reforms that will contribute to the improvement of people’s well-being. There has been a failure in many countries to design education systems that can improve people’s lives of especially the marginalized and those discriminated

71 Sengupta, op.cit. 11.
against. Human development capability approach can make a big contribution in formulating an education that can help in the improvement of the lives of citizens. There seems to be a thirst for improving people’s quality of life in policy designs across the globe. This is exemplified by the new development measures that have come up; such as quality-of-life, human development, and the freedom for people to live a life that they have reason to value. This is nothing else but a quest for the human development capability approach in the policy making process. The challenge is that there are not many people or countries embracing the human development capability approach to education because many still think that other approaches such as human capital or modernization are the best way to go.72

The key originators of the human development capability approach are Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. The two have differences in the way they perceive the capability approach (for instance, in determining the capabilities people need to enhance); however, they agree that education plays an important role in improving human well-being. This is the reason why human development capability theorists advocate for this approach to education to governments and partners in education as a way to improve people’s well-beings in their countries.73 The approach demands that governments, policy makers and donors ensure that they develop policies that will enable the capability-deprived and disadvantaged individuals and groups to improve on their living

73 Manion et al. op.cit. 219.
conditions and well-being.\(^74\) It is an attractive approach to education especially to those who are marginalized and discriminated against in society. The reason for its attractiveness is that it includes equalizing external conditions so that all people can have an opportunity to achieve their valued outcomes. The human development capability approach to education can work successfully if there is collaborative effort from the individuals, families, states and civil societies working together to create an environment that can give equal opportunities to all children and youth to achieve what they value.\(^75\)

**Human Development Capability Approach and Well-being**

There are scholars who argue that the human development capability approach bridges the gaps that are left out by the human capital and human rights-based approaches to education. These scholars claim, for instance, that it is only the human development approach to education that uses the bottom-up approach to education in which it is able to address the issues of equality, distributive justice, the relationship between public policy and well-being, and the freedom of individual members in society. This approach to education brings into discussion a wider perspective of education policy-making that can inform education policy makers, governments and donors to be conscious of their responsibility to design and support an education system that does not marginalize some groups of people. From this perspective, a good education policy must reflect the promotion of people’s well-being in its design and implementation. People who consume that education must be able to see that it is meant for their well-being and not someone

\(^{74}\) Cited by Manion, ibid.

else’s.\footnote{Manion and Menashy, op. cit. 232.} This is the reason why this approach to education begins by looking at the obstacles that block children and youth from achieving their potential, in order to find ways to minimize them so that they may not block the young people from accessing the opportunities that education offers. The other advantage for the human development capability approach is that it is not accused of being linked to a particular cultural or historical tradition like the case human capital and human rights-based.\footnote{Martha Nussbaum, “Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice,” \textit{Feminine Economics} 9(2-3), (2003): 39.}

The human development capability approach to education focuses on the ability of human beings to live the kind of lives they value established by a reasoning process for valuing that kind of life, and to enhance people choices so that they can have the alternative life choices from which to pick their preferred lifestyle. This approach puts into consideration the differences people have in their societies such as personal characteristics, social background, and economic circumstances, which all define who people are and what they are capable of doing and being. This implies that each individual has the ability to do or be certain things he/she has reason to value, and governments and partners in education need to pay attention to the activities and states of being that these people with their diversities want to do and be, and have reason to value. However, the human capital approach and human capability approach are closely related though distinct. For instance, there is no problem for an individual to become more productive, and at the same time have a better education, health or any characteristic that can improve his/her well-being. Humanity is a very important aspect of development
especially in those societies where you have some sections of the population experiencing multiple deprivations. Deprivations are a very strong obstacle for members in societies to pursue the improvement of their living conditions and well-being. The policies that are needed in many countries today are those which are relevant to the well-being and freedom of all citizens, the ones that promote economic production and also influence social change. 78

The Interdependence of the Three Approaches

The three approaches to development education all important. In the first place, HDCA focuses on the features of what people/citizens find valuable in their communities or countries. It has a multidimensional perspective of the benefits of education. The human capital approach to education focuses on education for economic productivity, while the human rights-based approach is more concerned with universal rights, where every child is entitled to an education. Each of the three approaches has its important role to play in education. 79 All the three approaches to education are important and they are interdependent by the fact that they are concerned with human beings especially in their human abilities, and the freedom they have to enhance these abilities. 80

Governments and all partners in education could use the good elements from other approaches to supplement the human development capability approach, which already incorporates many elements from other approaches to education. However, human development capability approach to education can be strengthened by enhancing

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79 Sen, Development as Freedom, op. cit. 293-296.
the capacity to aspire so that individuals can look to well-being as their destiny in education processes. There is a likelihood that people can begin valuing what they are receiving in education if they are looking toward the future they want to achieve or accomplish.\textsuperscript{81}

**Multilateral Agencies (Intergovernmental Organizations), International Nongovernmental Agencies and Dominant Approaches to Education**

The different approaches to development education are usually influenced by other external agents. In this section the study looked into whether these organizations/agencies practice a human capital, human rights or human capability approach to education. The focus was mainly on the multilateral and nongovernmental agencies which play a big role in influencing approaches to development education especially in the developing world. According to Singh, it is with the growth of globalization that these agencies have emerged as major players in both the domestic and foreign policy formulation by individual countries.\textsuperscript{82} By their nature of working across countries, they usually participate in making education policies that are actually shaping the current directions and development in national education systems especially in developing countries. Their influence is mainly felt in several areas such as cross-border mobility of capital, products, services and information.\textsuperscript{83} The focus of this study was


\textsuperscript{83} Stavros Moutsios, “International Organizations and Transnational Education Policy,” *Compare* 39, no. 4 (2009), 469.
limited to whether these international development partners practice human capital, human rights or human capability approach to education.

There are several reasons why international organizations started; and they include: helping in disaster relief situations, participation in colonial affairs, and other areas they deemed important.\textsuperscript{84} Some International Nongovernmental Organizations started much earlier than multilateral organizations. There are, in fact, some of the INGOs that started much earlier than the 1900s, and these were mainly affiliated to particular religions/sects or denominations. Their interests were mainly in carrying out development projects such as establishing schools and health centers especially in poor countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The engagement of multilateral organizations and International Nongovernmental Organizations in international development is something that has existed for a good number of decades.\textsuperscript{85}

International Organizations such as Multilateral Organizations and International Nongovernmental Organizations that participate in providing international development assistance of some kind have been a focus of attention to many nations especially those in the developing world. These organizations are crucial in the development of developing countries because they provide assistance to nations in form of loans, grants and

\textsuperscript{85} Colette Chabbott. Ibid. p. 80-84.
expertise. This in a way influences the kind of approach to education individual countries embrace.\textsuperscript{86}

In case of multilateral agencies, there are several organizations that have been involved in the educational development discourse and activities in many developing countries and these include: the World Bank (which mainly focuses on economic benefits of education), IMF (education for economic reasons), World Trade Organization (education as a tradable service), European Union (education for economic benefits), UNESCO (education as an entitlement), UNICEF (education as an entitlement), UNDP (education for human development), and International Nongovernmental Organizations.\textsuperscript{87} Each of these organizations and others practice education from a particular approach of education.

This section will begin by looking at three of the multilateral organizations which are: World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO). These organizations have a lot in common as regards the way they approach education policies and reforms.\textsuperscript{88}

The World Bank

The World Bank has played a very big role in formulating education policies in developing countries in activities such as construction of schools, curriculum

\textsuperscript{86} Nancy Alexander, Paying for Education: How the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund Influence Education in Developing Countries,” \textit{Peabody Journal of Education} 76, no. 3&4 (2001), 287.


development, and in textbook publication. It has also been involved in other education reforms that include school privatization and cost recovery and decentralization. For instance, the World Bank started what is called the Private Sector Development (PSD) strategy in developing countries that aims at extending the provision of educational services beyond states to private firms and nongovernmental organizations. The World Bank is a development bank and its focus is essentially on economic growth in less developed countries. The Bank uses education as an instrument to promote growth and human capital accumulation so as to reduce poverty in less developed countries. The Bank’s involvement in education, health and protection are all aimed at enhancing the economic productivity of people in less developed countries. The rationale of investment in people by the World Bank through education and health is to promote economic growth. This is the reason why scholars would be justified to conclude that the Bank practices human capital approach to education. The different activities that the Bank promotes such as providing loans for education, training teachers in less developed countries, girls education, education of ethnic minorities and indigenous groups and development of infrastructure, are all seen as ways to enhance human productivity.

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The International Monetary Fund

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) itself practices human capital approach to education in a sense that it sometimes promotes tight physical and monetary policies that may affect education because it usually limits government spending on issues that would create equal opportunities to all students. The IMF’s influence remains very strong on how countries decide on the kind of approach to use in designing their education policy and reforms because of being one of the few providers of loans to developing nations. The IMF works with the Fund to ensure that it plays its role of stabilizing the global economy and also monitoring how individual countries are performing.

The World Trade Organization - GATS

It is quite clear from its foundation that the World Trade Organization-GATS member countries are entitled to compete in offering educational services by organizing educational and training activities that can out-compete other countries. This is crucial because with WTO’s GATS, education become one of the 11 broad internationally tradable services. General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) made education a business, where people can cross boundaries to other countries either physically or online, foreign students are allowed to go to other countries, academic institutions from abroad can be established in individual countries, the inflow of foreign teachers or

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93 Nancy Alexander, “Paying for Education: How the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund Influence Education in Developing Countries,” p. 287.
faculty, so that all barriers that can interfere with trade in education as a service are removed to give opportunities to people to do business. This makes it a typical human capital development oriented agency.\textsuperscript{96} The common characteristic of the three organizations (World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organizations-GATS) is that they promote the neoliberal agenda in their policy documents. This agenda is built on three basic sets of policies, which are privatization of public companies, liberalization of international trade and investments, and deregulation of domestic economic and financial activity.\textsuperscript{97}

**The United Nations Agencies**

The United Nations has also agencies that partner with developing countries in formulating education policies or reforms. This study limited itself to the following United Nations agencies: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).\textsuperscript{98}

In case of UNESCO, education is seen as a means through which to foster a deeper and harmonious form of human development. It is through education that countries can reduce poverty, ignorance, exclusion and oppression among its populations. The whole education agenda is based on human rights as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which recognizes compulsory education as a right.


\textsuperscript{97} Moutsios, op. cit. p. 474.

\textsuperscript{98} Retrieved from http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/peace/link4/htm
to every individual child. This is further reinforced by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which promotes education as the way to enable children to reach their fullest potential in terms of cognitive, emotional and creative capacities. Access to quality education opportunities, ensuring that eligible learners complete their studies, and gender equality are part of what UNESCO promotes as an approach to education. This is why it is strong in practicing human rights-based approach to education.99

The education approach that UNICEF practices is reflected in its vision and scope, which is to give priority to the most deprived children in the poorest countries, including those involved in crises. This agency is a strong advocate and facilitator of education as a right to every child and this education can be used to support results in health, nutrition, and protection for the realization of other rights. The issues of access, quality, gender equality, marginalized populations or excluded groups, children in areas faced with natural disasters or conflict and those that lack in education inputs are a major concern for the UNICEF. This outlook of education puts it in the category of those agencies that practice human rights-based approach to education.100

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) practices human development approach to education. The idea in this approach to education is that human development should be at the center of all development endeavors. This agency of United Nations is the one that is responsible for coming up with the human development index, where they

focus on health, standard of living and education as crucial in people’s development.
Whenever UNDP sponsors education programs or policies, the focus is on how this
education is going to help people to have decent living conditions. There seems to be an
integration of human rights-based and human development approach in the mentioned
UN agencies. 101

International Nongovernmental Organizations

International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs) have not been a serious
objective of scholarly attention in the field of Comparative and International Education,
and yet they have become actors in the international system including the education
sector. Since they have a strong capacity to engage as service providers in the field of
education across the world, they deserve a lot of attentions if countries are to effect social
change in their communities. Their role cannot be ignored because most of them started
working in many less developed countries because of governments’ withdrawal from
funding education. The examples of INGOs in less developed countries include: CARE
International, ActionAid, Aga Khan Foundation, World Vision International, Save the
Children, and Oxfam International, and PLAN International. 102

The focus of this study was more on those International Non-Governmental
Organizations mentioned that have been given as examples in this section. These
organizations practice the human rights-based approach to education by paying attention

101 Claudia Neves, “International Organizations and the evaluation of education systems: A critical
comparative analysis,” European Journal of Vocational Training 45, 2008/3: 74. Check also on
102 Lutz Hoff and Anne Hickling-Hudson, “The Role of International Non-Governmental
Organizations in Promoting Adult Education for Social Change: A Research Agenda,” International
to issues of equity, poverty eradication, participation and empowerment. But when looked at carefully, organizations such as CARE International, Save the Children, PLAN International and World Vision International integrate human development and human rights-based in their practice of education. It is for that reason that concepts like participation, empowerment and support of vulnerable populations such as children and other marginalized populations are always of their education discussion. Many citizens in the developing world have their hopes in these INGOs to provide educational opportunities to their young generation, and so, cannot be neglected when looking at education in the developing countries.

**Critique of the Multilateral Organizations and International Nongovernmental Organizations**

The challenge of some of the above agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF is that they conceptualize the problem of poverty as an individual problem and not of structures within societies. This is the reason why some agencies have little to do with the redistribution of resources. Further, some of these organizations embrace the meritocratic ideal of human capital theory, which assumes that social inequalities are a result of individual differences with regard to talent, preferences and effort. This ideology neglects the reality of unequal opportunities that people experience in their environment.

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we see in organizations such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization is the endorsement of the neoliberal policies that view economic growth as being synonymous with development.  

Although it has been clear from the literature that there are some agencies that have a humanitarian outlook on the way they practice education, care has to be taken especially with those organizations that focus on human rights based approaches to development education. Human rights-based approaches are important in development thinking, however, states and agencies must seek to enhance accountability by focusing on increased participation of beneficiaries and acknowledging the need for institutional accountability. The purposes of education discussion is very important in a country, and that is why it is crucial that countries to be clear on how they want to practice education. The following chapter is about the EHDCA to education, a new model that is suggested in this study. The chapter will conceptualize aspirations and HDCA to see how they can interrelate to create an education for people’s well-being.

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CHAPTER 3
THE SCHOLARSHIP OF ASPIRATION, CAPABILITY APPROACH
AND HOW THEY INTERRELATE

This chapter of the dissertation was based on literature on aspirations and capabilities from the time these two concepts became a concern in the academia up to the present. The first section looks into what scholars discuss concerning aspirations such as the definition, nature of aspiration, the historical background of aspiration, factors that affect people’s aspirations and how aspirations become a concern in the field of education. This chapter is quite different from the previous because it aims at conceptualizing aspirations and capabilities and how the two concepts interrelated by reviewing the literature on the two concepts.

Aspiration

Since this study focuses on the concept of aspiration along with the human development capability approach, it is important to get the idea of what aspiration is and why it is important in this study. A better understanding of the nature of aspiring can help governments and policy makers to be more conscious of the freedoms people need to have to develop what they are capable of being and doing (capabilities) and other freedoms that people need to choose to follow up the future they value. As we think of providing an education that will help people to achieve their well-being and development, it is important that we also put into consideration the opportunities individuals have to develop their aspirations freely. If we take the situation of education in many developing
countries, some children and youth face multiple constraints and are not free to aspire to the future they would wish to achieve.  

**Historical Background of Aspiration as a Study**

One of the first studies of aspirations was done in the 1930s by scholars in psychology researching on ‘level of aspiration’. At this time, the findings could not be transferred to any other discipline. It is only in the 1950s that research on level of aspiration fades away and achievement motivation comes up as a dominant theory of motivation. Within the achievement motivation theoretical framework, the concentration was on what motivates people to set goals and their ability to succeed in achieving these set goals. This was viewed as an acquired trait, which at some moment in time needed intervention. The achievement motivation theory suggests that for people to achieve the goals they have set to achieve, there must always be an intervention that will facilitate the process to achieve those goals. From the achievement motivation theory, later emerged the social comparison theory, which focuses on the fact that within groups there are pressures toward uniformity. The implication to this is that individuals’ aspirations are influenced by other people with whom they interact. The gist for discussion, for the last number of decades is goal-setting, the reasons why some people succeed in achieving the set goals, and why others fail to achieve those goals.

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Definitions of Aspiration

The term aspirations is usually synonymous to terms like goals, ambitions, purposes, objectives, aims, yearnings, intentions, plans, dreams, cravings, desires, longings, and designs. It means that people can use any of these terms but implying aspirations. 111 There are several definitions of aspirations in literature and these include: aspirations as ‘what drive individuals to do more and be more than they presently are,’ 112 and as ‘the pool of individually constructed alternative dreams, hopes and desires for one’s future and are continually modified by both internal and external influences,’ 113 or ‘achievement motivation’ 114 or ‘life plans’. 115 There are other elements that are in other definitions of aspirations that could also be useful in this discussion, and one is by the National Family and Parenting Institute Report in England, which defines aspirations as ‘beliefs that outcomes are contingent upon actions’ 116 and also aspiration as ‘the desire to achieve our potential’. The challenge with the latter definition of aspiration is how individuals or groups perceive what their potential is. The rationale here is that it is more

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112 Cobb, McIntire and Pratt, ibid.
meaningful to desire to achieve your potential when you are aware of what that potential is.\textsuperscript{117}

The definition of aspiration in this inquiry is the one suggested by The Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations which is “the ability to set goals for the future while maintaining the inspiration in the present to reach those goals.” This definition of aspiration does not only apply to the education sector but also to many other aspects of human life. In that case it is a reminder to all citizens in nations that all people must have purposes for which they want to achieve in the future. It is these purposes that individuals aspire to achieve. Whatever people want to achieve, there must be a purpose for which they want to achieve it.\textsuperscript{118}

The Nature of Aspirations

Aspirations have been a focus of policy relating to education, poverty, development and social mobility for some years. There is a strong belief in many societies of seeing individual progress and collective ambition of nations in terms of higher level achievement. There are many studies today which indicate that the study of aspirations is a must do adventure because in order for young people to succeed, they must want to succeed, that is; they must strengthen their capacity to aspire. There has obviously been a discussion of whether some aspirations of some people are

\textsuperscript{117} Waterhouse and Clayton, “\textit{The Learning Catalysts Project: Action Research for Raising Aspirations},” (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2010), 44.

fundamentally low, while the aspirations of others are high. The other argument is whether all people possess higher aspirations and the difference comes in because of the barriers that individuals and groups encounter that block them from realizing their aspirations.¹¹⁹

The inquiry into the aspirations of people gives some insights on the various ambitions held by young people about what they want to achieve in the future. What young people want to become is not limited to external things like income and jobs, but should be extended to other things like self and spiritual fulfillment. Aspirations should not be limited to education and occupation but also to other aspects of life that people aim at achieving. Further, aspirations are dynamic in a sense that they change from time to time depending on people’s interaction with peers, family members, educators, community members and other sources of information that widen people’s worldviews. Aspirations also develop as we go through the human development stages from childhood to old age. What people aspire to when they are children is different from what they aspire to when they are adolescents, and it is further different from what they aspire to when they are adults. People in society are sometimes disappointed when they state their aspirations to their family members/peers/relatives/teachers or other people with whom they interact and they do not support or approve them. At times the people to whom they are talking to about what they want to do or become in the future (their aspirations) are not interested in that kind of talk and they simply ignore. This demoralizes many young

people and they have sometimes changed their aspirations to feel at home with their peers or for the sake of being with others in families, communities, educational institutions or any other societal groups.\textsuperscript{120}

**The Contextual Nature of Aspiration**

People’s ideas of what they choose to pursue for their future lives (aspirations) are embedded and nurtured within their cultural context. The capacity to aspire to what people want to achieve in the future is one dimension of culture, which in Appadurai’s languages is called the culture of future aspirations.\textsuperscript{121} People are able to develop this culture of future aspirations if they have cultural resources that will facilitate their ability to pursue the future they hope for. Some people do not have a strong culture of future aspirations because there are other factors that are strongly rooted in their history and traditions which need to be addressed to remove the obstacles that fail them from developing the culture of future aspirations.\textsuperscript{122} There are cultural resources such as traditions, religious heritages, and colonial histories in some countries that need serious attention for people to cultivate a strong culture of future aspirations. These are issues that policy makers do not need to neglect as they formulate national policies.\textsuperscript{123} The aspirations that people have do not develop from the vacuum but from their different

\textsuperscript{120} Keith Kintrea et al., “The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations op.cit. 12-13.


social contexts such as families, communities and schools. People draw their aspirations from the lives of other people around them. This is why Ray’s aspirations window is important because others become the window through which people can see the possibilities that exist within their social sphere. The capacity to aspire is not only an individual trait but also a social and cultural capability. This capacity to aspire is shaped through interactions with family, friends, school and popular culture and resources. Young people should be empowered by strengthening their capacity to aspire so that they are able to achieve their imagined futures. Further, individuals develop within historical contexts that have different social, economic, political and educational environments. These have a way they affect the aspirations that live in these different historical contexts.

**The Diversity of Aspiration**

Research shows that aspirations have a multidimensional nature, and some of the things that people aspire to in society include: having a good job, a good education, a high social status, a prosperous family, consuming certain goods, and a beautiful place. Ray reinforces the list of what people aspire to by adding on dignity, good health, recognition, political power, or dominating on religious or ethnic grounds. Individuals and groups determine their aspirations by considering their place in the socio-economic

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124 Debraj Ray, 2006?
hierarchy. This can explain why people have got different kinds of aspirations within society. There is a diversity of aspirations, and this diversity demands that people be given diverse educational opportunities to be able to accomplish their aspirations. For instance, in education all young people do not need to go to the university to achieve their aspirations. Some young people could, for instance, join apprenticeship type of training, while other could achieve their aspirations by being engaged in nonformal or formal technical and vocational education and training. This diversity of aspirations needs to be respected in all spheres of life.

Terminologies Used in Conceptualizing Aspiration

The scholarship on aspiration has enabled aspiration scholars to come up with some terminologies that can help in understanding the concept of aspiration. Ray introduces the concepts of aspirations window and aspirations gap. By aspirations window, Ray means the cognitive world of the individual person, and what the individual sees as attainable. According to Ray, human beings draw their aspirations from the lives, achievements and ideals of those who live in their surroundings and those with whom they interact (those in their aspirations window). People’s aspirations windows can limit their ability to understand the means that can contribute to achieving their future aspirations. There are also situations where individuals are not sure what their aspirations are and may not be having clear hopes and ambitions for their future because of their limited opportunities. Sometimes people need to be helped to understand better the role

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of their aspirations windows in achieving their goals so that they can strategize to make sure that people are in an environment that creates a wider aspirations window. On the other hand, Ray describes the aspirations gap as the difference between the standard of living that is aspired to and the standard of living that one already has. For Ray, it is this gap that matters for one’s future-oriented behavior. The argument here is that the aspirations gap should be big enough to inspire the individual person to want to make an investment to improve his/her situation, but it should not be too wide to frustrate the investment and effort that an individual has put in to achieve those unreachable aspirations.130

The other terminology is the aspirational zone, which refers to the dreams people have of their future and getting actively involved in working towards achieving them. It is said that such people are in their aspirational zone. There are also people who work hard on their jobs, studies, professional careers and other activities that people are engaged in, yet they do not have any vision of where they want this hard work to lead them. Quaglia recommends that people are helped to know that they matter and there are people who care for them, ensuring that people are engaged in whatever they are doing so that all their efforts are directed towards achieving their hopes and dreams, and finally creating an environment whereby all people have purposes they want to achieve. It is when people have purposes in life that they get motivated to life activities that will lead them towards achieving those purposes. It is when people know that they matter, and are

engaged in what they are doing, and are having purposes to which they are directing their
effort that they are at what Quaglia calls the “aspiration state.”¹³¹

Riddell also introduces the concept of aspirational identity, where he is concerned
with young people’s agency. For him, with agency, young people can be able to follow
their academic or occupational aspirations. However, the environment should be designed
in such a way that it helps them to grow into the view of themselves. This agency would
even enable them to look at the aspirations of other people who are like them. The
challenge is that there are many barriers that can fail young people to have their own
aspirational identity and these include the influences from their homes and parental
interaction, the peers and friends with whom they socialize, the community context in
which they live, their school staff, and their school peers and media.¹³² Finally, there is
another terminology that is suggested by Hart, and that is aspiration set. This means that
individuals do not have only one aspiration, but a set of them. It is by looking at the set of
the aspirations people have that the individuals themselves or policy makers can be able
to see the options and the freedoms people have to achieve those aspirations.¹³³

**The Importance of Aspirations**

The study of aspirations, especially those held by young people is important in the
modern world because people are more concerned with the kind of work they want to do
and the education they need to accomplish what they want to achieve. Studies reveal that

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¹³¹ The Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, How to help kids find their aspiration,
¹³² Richard Riddell, Aspiration, *Identity and Self-Belief: Snapshots of Social Structure at Work*
young people from marginalized communities tend to have low aspirations, which has become a barrier for them to achieve the best of their potential. On the other hand, young people from privileged families portray an advantage of high aspiration. This explains why some scholars suggest that raising the aspirations of marginalized young people could significantly improve their educational and career outcomes. There are many policies in different countries that have started considering aspirations of young people or marginalized groups in designing their education policies.\textsuperscript{134} It is only when you have focus of what you want to achieve in the present or in the future that you are able to focus on the means that will help you to get there. Aspirations can be seen as purposes that individuals need to look to if they are to achieve what they have as achievement targets both in the present and in the future.\textsuperscript{135}

Aspirations are important because they help people to understand specific individuals or groups of people in society that tend to have fewer advantages of achieving the goods and services society offers, including employment opportunities. Further, people cannot achieve what they do not dream about. For instance, an individual cannot become a lawyer or physician or engineer or a mechanic without a dream to become one of those careers. This is why aspirations are so fundamental in the attainment process,

\textsuperscript{135} The Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, “How to help kids find their aspirations”, http://www.blogs.kqed.org.
and yet, little attention has been given to young people’s dreams and aspirations that would eventually lead to certain occupational careers or attainments.\textsuperscript{136}

There are many governments which are looking at young people’s aspirations in order to raise their educational standards and performances in educational institutions. The rationale, in this case is that academic performance can improve if young people are motivated by addressing their aspirations. Countries which want to improve the academic performance of their institutions look at raising aspirations of their young generation as one of the ways to improve the standards of their academic performance. The issue here is of improving standards and performance either in education or any other field.\textsuperscript{137}

Addressing young people’s aspiration is the way governments and policy makers can show their recognition of young people’s talents and also participate in raising their ambitions. This is one way to promote creativity and innovation among young people.\textsuperscript{138}

In addition, there are countries which are in competition to make sure that they produce high quality products so that they can either join the world economies or remain on top as world super powers at the level of economic growth and economic development. This demands that they raise young people’s aspirations to more advanced training and advanced degrees in order to become more competitive in the global economy. Many young people cannot remain in school unless governments find ways to motivate them (by raising their aspirations) to remain in school until they have acquired

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\textsuperscript{137} Leslie Morrison Gutman & Rodie Akerman, Determinants of aspirations, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p. 2.
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the knowledge and skills that both the individual and the states need to compete with other nations of the world. Many young people are often not motivated to remain in school because their future as it relates to education is not clear.\textsuperscript{139}

The need to explore people’s aspirations and the role they play in helping people achieve their potential is very important in society. For instance, there are people who are always clear and certain of what their occupational aspirations are in life. The knowledge of what they want to do or be in the present or the future influences them in making their educational choices. This is the same kind of reasoning that is followed by those who aspire to different roles in adult life such as becoming husbands and wives or parents.\textsuperscript{140}

\textbf{Factors Influencing Aspirations of Young People}

There are several factors that influence young people’s aspirations and these include: geographical surroundings of the people, how young people are brought up in their families or communities, the cultural and social context in which they live and move, and the social networks in which they are immersed.\textsuperscript{141} The idea that aspirations depend on social context is further reinforced by Anyidoho et al., who bring to the discussion the fact that context comprises other features that have to be put into consideration such as personal beliefs, societal expectations, and structural opportunities.

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{The Education and Skills Bill 2008} (c.25), United Kingdom.


\textsuperscript{141} Arjun Appadurai, The capacity to aspire: The terms of recognition, op.cit. p. 67.
and constraints.\textsuperscript{142} Other influences are socio-economic background, gender and ethnicity. However, the study of aspirations should not avoid looking into individual determinants that can also influence one’s aspirations. People also need to look into issues of individual abilities, talents, self-perceptions and attributions and individual behaviors that can highly influence one’s aspirations. This implies that the influences people have on their aspirations are attributed to both the individual him/herself, others, and the context in which this individual lives and he/she is brought up.\textsuperscript{143} The idea of looking at the factors affecting people’s aspirations as to be seen from both the individual and others is supported by Carter, who argues that the problem in the past was to study aspirations by only focusing on individual characteristics, and people caring little on accounting for the institutional environments and young people’s experiences in education institutions.\textsuperscript{144} There is always a tendency of many people especially the young to seek to please and to conform to what others (such as parents, teachers, friends, peers and relatives) think they should aspire to, or what others would like to hear from them. This tendency of pleasing others suffocates the ability of individuals to reflect deeply on their ingrained beliefs and hopes.\textsuperscript{145}

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143 Leslie Morrison Gutman & Rodie Akerman, Determinants of aspirations, op.cit. p. 11.
144 Carter, \textit{A Dream Deferred? Examining the Degree Aspirations of African American and White College Students}, op.cit. 31.
\end{footnotesize}
The Contribution of Arjun Appadurai to the Scholarship of Aspirations

Appadurai’s anthropological perspective brings in a new outlook in the scholarship of aspirations. He challenges policy makers who have always engaged the concept of aspiration by framing it in terms of individual wants, choices and preferences. Appadurai suggests that people need to go a little bit further beyond the simplistic economic view of aspiration to viewing aspirations as a collective cultural capacity. This means that the development of individuals’ aspirations is very much influenced by the interaction they have had in their social life. In that case, reducing the future-oriented dimension of culture to economic analyses is just being simplistic in explaining the concept of aspiration. People’s aspirations give you an idea of their ideals, ambitions, goals, visions, that is; things that would make their life worthwhile. When people are looking to a good life in the future, they want to go beyond the daily struggle for survival to a life that they would value to live. The future-orientedness or the capacity to aspire for what one wants to achieve in the near future or far future is not the same among the poor and the rich. By the nature of their day-to-day life experiences, the rich generally have a stronger capacity to aspire compared to the poor people who work with extremely weak resources around them. The poor tend to subscribe to norms whose social effects worsen their deprived state. This is the reason why Appadurai suggests that the poor people have to be taught the capacity to aspire. This is not to deny the capacity of the

146 Appadurai, The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition, op.cit. 67.
poor to aspire but to bring to the discussion the fact that the poor usually do not have the favorable circumstances in which the practices of wish, want, plan or aspire occur. The cultural contexts in which they live affect somehow their capacity to aspire for things that would have probably made their lives more meaningful to them. It is this capacity that keeps people optimistic to accomplish the unfinished business, which is to achieve their aspirations or what they set up to achieve. This would mean that even the poor people to pool out of their poverty, there must be that cultural capacity to aspire to living a life that is better than the poverty in which they are living. It is this capacity to aspire that facilitates the processes of moving from the undesirable conditions (such as poverty) in which they live to the desirable conditions they think are better than those in which they are living. It is within this context that the concept of aspirations becomes very important because if the poor are able to articulate their aspirations, then, that could open the doors for increased capabilities of the poor populations. One of the strongest points that Appadurai brings in this discussion of the concept of aspirations is that he sees strengthening or enhancing poor people’s capacity to aspire as a pragmatic way through which the poor people can pool out of poverty. However, the capacity to aspire is not something you can be taught, and the poor learn it in a day; it is something that the poor need to practice from time to time so that it eventually becomes part and parcel of their way of life. The capacity to aspire has always to be facilitated by practice and repetition so that it may not diminish with time.149

The way aspirations are formed, pursued, and evaluated are within a social context. Aspirations, in that context are very crucial because it is that cultural capacity that individuals have to realize their ambitions or dreams that they have for their future, but which are influenced by the social context in which individuals live. This could explain why in his study on aspiration, Appadurai focuses on the relationship between culture and the future that can be obscured by the individualization of aspiration.  

The capacity to aspire is also related to the power people have in society. Those whose power in society is strongly developed tend to have more capacity to aspire, while those whose power is weak tend to possess less capacity to aspire. This power is usually expressed in terms of wealth, reaches and status. There is always a tendency of the stronger groups in society to have more powerful relationships with the dreams they have for their future. The reason is that the capacity to aspire is something they practice in their day-to-day life. Children and youth in strong communities have the opportunity to practice, and repeat and they keep on exploring their aspirations with adults. Freedom is an incentive for the young generation in many strong families or communities while it (freedom) tends to be limited in poor families or communities in society. Young people in many strong families grow up knowing that it is normal to exercise and express one’s aspirations on one’s family or his/her community. Strong families generally tend to

understand that they need to nurture this cultural capacity among the young if they are to be successful or achieve their potential in life.  

An individual or a group that has the capacity to aspire has the ability to imagine the future in more detailed ways and they are capable of transferring what they imagine into their desired outcomes. The navigational capacity to aspire is very important in people’s lives; however, for it to be strengthened, people need the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources so that they can successfully find the way into the future they hope for. In other words, having the capacity to aspire is not enough for people to become successful in achieving the future they want to achieve; people need knowledge, experience and education on which they can draw to making meaningful decisions about their future. The access people have to knowledge depends on the social networks they have in their social structure. This is why the location in which an individual or group lives plays an important role in determining what the individual or group is open to in terms of experience and exposure.

In many cases, the poor are not able to build a strong culture of aspiration due to the limiting conditions in which they live. This is a challenge to people’s capacity to aspire in a sense that this capacity is not evenly distributed among people in society. The other issue to put into consideration is that there are people who have a voice and have others on their side to facilitate their efforts toward achieving their aspirations. It is

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152 Appadurai, ibid. p. 76.
common in society that such people always have their values, beliefs, norms and aspirations respected in such a way that there are always means and ways provided to make sure that they plan and push forward to achieving their dreams or aspirations. This mainly favors those with power in terms of wealth, knowledge and other resources that are crucial to facilitate ones process to achieve his/her dreams. It is also important to emphasize the fact that it is not enough for people to have resources at their disposal, the ability to use those resources so as to realize their aspirations is very crucial. It is within this context that Appadurai brings in the issue of the politics of recognition that indicates clearly the inequalities that exist between those who are powerful and those who are less powerful. The powerful groups not only have the ability to realize their particular aspirations, but they also have the collective power to shape cultural contexts in which different desires are formed and valorized as aspirational.155 One of the ways through which the poor can increase their capacity to aspire is by creating an educational environment in their locality that will enable them to make a link between aspirations and achievement. It is by creating an environment where they are able to exercise their agency that they can have an opportunity to strengthen their capacity to aspire and work to achieve what they want to accomplish in life.156 Communities, policy makers and

156 Arjun Appadurai, *The capacity to aspire: Culture and the terms of recognition*, p. 70.
governments have to create opportunities for the less powerful or disadvantaged groups in society so that they can also be able to rehearse, explore and pursue their aspirations.\textsuperscript{157}

Appadurai’s concept of the culture of aspiration enriches the discussion on enhancing capabilities. Since the culture of aspiration is a cultural capacity that individuals can use to achieve well-being or improved quality of life, strengthening that capacity to aspire becomes a very strong tool for the less powerful to navigate through and achieve their well-being or improved quality of life. People cannot achieve their well-being or improve their quality of life without a strengthened capacity to aspire to it. However, there is need to pay attention to the fact that people’s aspiring levels differ depending on the opportunities they have to practice the capacity to aspire. The challenge remains that aspirations are always formed and nurtured within a cultural context, which may either help the individual’s capacity to aspire grow or constrain it. The development of the capacity to aspire of children and youth depends heavily on how they have been socialized in their social settings such as families, schools, communities and religious institutions.\textsuperscript{158}

**The Discrepancy between Aspirations and Outcome**

Macleod argues that any society that has interest in ensuring that young people achieve their aspirations must address the issue of inequality among people. He brings to our attention the fact that people in their nations need to shift from individual deficits to


structural inequality. It would be unrealistic to say that one understands the aspirations of young people when he/she has not looked into young people’s structural constraints on opportunity. Once these constraints accumulate, they can be an obstacle to one capacity to achieve his/her aspirations. There are, in fact, societies which are structured in such a way that they are meant to perpetuate poverty and extreme economic inequality.\footnote{Jay MacLeod, \textit{Ain't No Makin' it: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood}, 3rd Edition. Boulder: Westview, (2009), 242.} This implies that the opportunities people have affect the formulation of aspirations. The main issue to think about is the opportunity structure and what one is capable of doing and being, which, in some cases affect one’s aspirations for the future.\footnote{Macleod, ibid. pp. 7 & 71.}

Beeghley also reinforces the idea that social structures in communities play a big role to either enhance or diminish one’s capacity to achieve his/her aspirations. He argues that the experience in some communities has been for families at the top of the social structure to maintain their position at the top and the families at the bottom to remain at the bottom. In this context, it means that children can be born in either the top class or bottom class and remain there for their whole life. It is true that there are cases of social mobility but this is usually rare. This makes the whole discussion of aspirations a complex issue.\footnote{Leonard Beeghley, “Individual and Structural Explanations of Poverty,” \textit{Population Research and Policy Review} 7, (1988), 207.} At times the social structure becomes so marginalizing that young people do not see any value in aspiring to whatever they would have liked to achieve in their future lives. They do not see any possibility of going beyond what people of their category can achieve in society, and this in a way discourages them from aspiring to
things they know they are not going to achieve. For them, any effort to aspire to things you will not achieve is a waste of time.\textsuperscript{162} There are cases where some groups of people have been demonized as people with no moral responsibility or people without social worth and at times thought of as people with cultural depravity by dominant groups. This is what Macleod describes as being in the cultural limbo that perpetuates the disparity between aspirations and outcomes especially among marginalized groups.\textsuperscript{163}

Many young people have at times been misdirected to think that it is people’s problem that they do not achieve what they aspire to. This is by instilling in them the idea that if you aspire for something and you go for it you will get it. Others have taught the young that those who have not achieved, it is because they do not aspire for it. Other people have gone on to say that people do not achieve what they aspire to because they do not commit themselves to it. They have constantly taught the young ones that there are always many opportunities only that many people do not want to achieve their aspirations in the abundance of opportunities. The ideology that people fail to achieve their aspirations because of lack of personal initiative and competence does not always hold. The problem could be the structure of the society in which individuals live. Both the individuals and the social order have a big role to play in enabling individuals achieve their aspirations. The question of laziness, failing to work hard, not studying hard can be a problem, but there is also the question of lack of opportunities in society. This is the reason why young people do not need to blame themselves all the time because there are

\begin{footnotes}
\item[162] Macleod, op.cit. pp. 63-64.
\item[163] Ibid. p. 228.
\end{footnotes}
some situations that are beyond them such as the social order. For instance, there are issues of discrimination in terms of race, ethnic group and geographical location that can create a wider disparity between aspirations and outcomes and yet individuals do not have much to do with it.\textsuperscript{164}

Macleod brings in another challenge in the scholarship of aspirations that many societies need to address, and this is the disrespectfulness and disdainful of manual work. There are people who think that jobs related to manual work cannot enhance individuals’ self-esteem. There is a tendency of some young people to aspire to those jobs that can make them a little presentable wherever they go and not jobs that make them dirty or smell. However, the dilemma remains that some of these so called dirty jobs are more paying than academic jobs and yet some young people want those jobs which are less paying but command respect in their view.\textsuperscript{165}

The reality that people need to face especially in the occupation area is that even if everyone excels in achieving the higher aspirations he/she aspired to, a big number of those who succeed will be disappointed because the society will not have occupations for all those who have succeeded to get the requirements for the available occupations. The disadvantage is always on the side of the marginalized who do not play on the same playing field as the advantaged in society.\textsuperscript{166}

People in society need to realize the fact that the common mentality that any child can succeed in becoming even a president of a country, as it is the case in the American

\\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., pp. 219-223.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., p. 235.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 241-242.
dream is a myth. People in society do not have the same access to opportunity. Members of society who are in the lower side of the pyramid, that dream of being successful is a hallucination. Young people can realize their aspirations by improving their material conditions such as living in better housing facilities, having access to health care, providing child care, and ensuring that they have social services. Every young person has got an ambition of becoming somebody in life or doing something in which he/she has interest. It is when societies deny them this opportunity that they frustrate their aspirations and reduce them to the state of hopelessness at a very tender age when their aspirations should be being nurtured. This situation leaves young people frustrated because of not seeing a future that is promising in their lives.167

In order to help young people achieve their aspirations, there is need to create a truly open society where the life chances can be accessed to those who are at the top of the pyramid and also those who are at the bottom (the marginalized). This equal distribution of opportunities can facilitate the process of those at the bottom to move towards the top. This demands that societies accept to transform the social structure borrowing the social vision of the transformation of society, which makes an effort to reduce social inequality within the social structure. The capitalistic free market approach to resolving problems in the social structure by itself may not favor the young people, especially those from marginalized communities to achieve their aspirations because free markets have nothing to do with protecting the environment in which these people live, nor do they help in meeting people’s needs. Many people have failed to recognize the

167 Ibid., pp. 261-262.
major role of market as a servant of people and not as a master of people. The unfortunate part of it is that even the so called democratic policies have been entangled in a market system that needs to be overhauled because of its weaknesses.\textsuperscript{168}

**The Relationship between Aspiration and Education**

Literature reveals that young people who have access and exposure to occupational and educational opportunities tend to aim higher in what they are aspiring to in life. This means that limited occupational and educational opportunities tend to curtail the aspirations of young people deprived of access and exposure to those opportunities.\textsuperscript{169}

In the realm of education, aspirations refer to the hopes that young people have for the future towards the education and the jobs they want to achieve. Young people’s aspirations are built on their ideas and how they respond to the pressures of family, peers, school, community and society. From this perspective, partners in education have always to pay attention to the ways in which people’s aspirations are deeply affected by the experience of individuals and how they engage with their significant others and the institutions that socialize them.\textsuperscript{170}

In matters of education aspirations are very crucial because they mediate what individuals desire to accomplish and what the society has to offer. This means that as individual students aspire to different styles of life and different kind of occupations, they

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., p. 262.


always need to know the opportunities available in the communities where they live.\textsuperscript{171}

There are cases when students are asked about their aspirations and they hesitate to give their response. This does not mean that such students are undecided on what they want to achieve in the future or what they really know that they will achieve, it is just because they see little option involved in what they want to achieve. It is because of such hopeless state that they end up being open to whatever comes their way. Students, even those from low income families or communities have a lot of aspirations, but with time they come to discover through their experiences and the experiences of their family or community members that it is hard to achieve some of their aspirations, and they finally give up. They realize that the gap between what they aspire to and what they are going to do is too wide.\textsuperscript{172}

There is a general belief that having higher aspirations is an important mechanism in achieving good educational and occupational outcomes. However, people need to be conscious of other factors such as gender, cultural norms, social class, ethnicity, religion, disability status, which can create individual unique experiences and become obstacles to achieving good educational and occupational outcomes.\textsuperscript{173}

However, there is also need to know that there have been some concerns within the scholarship of aspirations. Kenway argues that there has been a tendency of some scholars to think that there are some people who aspire and others do not, which she puts into question by arguing that all human beings have aspirations that must be attended to.

\textsuperscript{171} Macleod, op.cit. p.7.
\textsuperscript{172} Macleod, ibid. p. 63.
For her, it does not make any sense for people to come up with programs that are intended to impart aspirations in those individuals who do not have them. People have aspirations and all governments and policy makers need to do is to find out what they are from the people themselves and then make their policies within people’s aspirations. In that case, governments, policy makers and all partners in education should resist the mentality of allocating aspirations to some groups and not to others. All people aspire but to different things. Kenway does not agree with the way modern educational institutions promote education by focusing mainly on jobs, money or specialization. She argues that people have an aspiration set, and some people’s aspirations may have nothing to do with securing jobs and making money, yet they are in educational institutions. The study of aspirations can inform governments, education policy makers and all citizens to understand that life is not all about getting money and acquiring jobs but also about other things that could be known by looking into people’s aspiration sets. There are very many ways through which people can engage in the world depending on each one’s aspiration set. Policy makers need always to know the different reasons for which people need education. The mentality that every individual needs education to secure a job or earn an income is misleading. Governments, education policy designers and all citizens should recognize the fact that there is a diversity of aspirations among learners, with each learner having his/her own aspiration set. Educational institutions cannot claim to take care of the needs of their learners when they do not have the knowledge of what each learner is going to pick from his or her aspiration set. What the individual is going to do or be depends on the choice he or she makes from his/her aspiration set. Kenway argues that
standardized ways of people’s knowing and being that are witnessed in many policy documents limit individual’s capacity to explore their aspiration set. There is need for Governments and policy-makers to conceptualize their education policies putting into consideration the aspiration set of each individual learner, and the diversity of aspirations that individuals in an educational institutions have. People have a diversity of aspirations and that is why some of them fail to fit in institutions such as schools where aspirations are limited to a few particular fields. There are also people who find it difficult to aspire to what is already determined in education system because they do not think that that allows them to explore freely into other areas that are not yet explored. Other learners enjoy venturing into different lines of inquiry than what is available in their education systems. Any education system should enable all learners to foster their aspiration and be able to pick up from their aspiration set what they want to do and be in life. \textsuperscript{174} Education being a core capability, and aspirations a core concept in education, it stands to reason that the concept can enrich the human development capability approach.

\textbf{The Capability Approach}

From the previous section on aspirations, Quaglia and Webb defined aspiration as “the ability to set goals for the future while maintaining the inspiration in the present to reach those goals.” \textsuperscript{175} It would be unrealistic to think of achieving one’s aspirations without having the resources to help you get there. According to Conradie, these


\textsuperscript{175} Quaglia and Webb, op.cit.
resources include: health, education, creativity, agency, education and money.\textsuperscript{176} It is these resources and many others that have been termed as capabilities in the human development capability approach. If we are dreaming of achieving certain goals, then we must think of the capabilities that can facilitate our journey to achieve those goals or aspirations. It is from that perspective that the study focuses on conceptualizing capabilities, and at the end of the chapter sees how capability and aspirations interrelate to produce education for human development.

The capability approach, sometimes called the human development capability approach or capabilities approach has been used in many academic disciplines and different people, organizations, students and public officials have looked to this framework to see how it could better people’s lives. However, the challenge is that scholars from different disciplines approach the capability approach using their disciplinary lenses. This has at times led to misunderstandings because of the different ways of approaching the capability approach framework. An understanding into the concepts used in the Capability Approach could help readers to get a better understanding why the framework has attracted the attention of many people from different disciplines, organizations and places of work. There is a lot of theoretical reasoning that demands the explanation of the concepts in the framework so that readers can follow the discussion with a clear mind of where the discussion is coming from and where it is going.\textsuperscript{177} This


section sets up to explain the different concepts that are usually used in discussing issues that relate with the capability approach framework, the originators of the capability approach, the relationship between capabilities and education, and challenges that have arisen in the scholarship of the capability approach. The thorough study of the concepts used in the capability approach will give us a good beginning for the study into the framework.

**Understanding the Fundamental Concepts in the Capability Approach**

The concepts used in studying the interrelatedness of aspirations and capability approach are concepts borrowed mainly from the capability approach and aspiration. It is for that matter crucial to have a section in this chapter that defines and explains these concepts. The knowledge of these concepts can help the readers to have a clear perspective from which I am using capabilities in my aspirations-capability approach model to education. It is when people have captured the understanding of the concepts in the approach such as development, human development, capability, functioning, agency and freedom that we are able to discuss comfortably the aspirations-capability framework.

With a better understanding of human development capability approach, we can comfortably look into its interrelatedness with aspirations, and later see how the approach can be strengthened by aspiration in the formation of policy to promote human well-being in societies. As regards the concepts, the focus will be on the following: development, human development, capability/capabilities, freedom, functioning, well-being, agency and aspiration.
Development

The concept of development in the capability approach is used in the sense of increasing human freedom or agency in ways that allow people to pursue what they think is important and valuable to them.\textsuperscript{178} The concept of development is seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms of people so that they can become and do what they have reason to value. It is not so much of how much growth people have achieved in terms of incomes or gross national product, the high level of industrialization that a country has achieved, or even the advanced technology that a country is using that will determine how developed that particular country is, but only the expansion of the freedoms of people so that they can become and do what they value. In other words, it means that people have got the opportunities their need to accomplish the things they value in life. Personal incomes, growth national product, industrialization, advanced technology and social modernization can only be useful as long as they are expanding human freedom. But freedom also depends on other influences such as education, healthcare and the liberty to participate in public discussion. However, development as expanding freedoms of people to be and do what they value is impossible if the barriers that are the sources of unfreedoms are not removed. It is when these obstacles (unfreedoms) are removed that people in society become free. From the capability approach perspective, it is this expansion of people’s freedoms that is called development. Education is one of the means people in society can use to expand the freedoms of people so that they can enjoy being and doing what they have reason to value. Development is about enhancing and ensuring

\textsuperscript{178} Sen, Development as Freedom, 4.
that people enjoy the freedom to and be what they value.\textsuperscript{179} The concept of development, in this sense goes beyond what people accumulate in terms of wealth, or the growth of gross national product and other income variables to enabling people to have the freedom they need to live the kind of life they have reason to value.\textsuperscript{180} Further, development has to be understood in terms of its purpose which is to enlarge people’s choices. The number of choices people can make are unlimited and they can change over time, which means that from the capability approach perspective we cannot limit development to numbers because what people want to achieve and is valuable to them is infinite. The kind of development with which we are concerned in this discussion is the one that puts human beings at the center of all progress and development.\textsuperscript{181}

\textbf{Human Development}

This study takes the concept of human development as perceived by Mahbub ul Haq, who, in his concept of human development puts human beings at the center of human progress and development. The well-being of human beings is at the center of all policy designs and reforms in societies. Development does not mean much without centering on bettering human lives. Haq’s concept of human being embraces all human beings without exception. The list includes children, adults, old, rural, urban, rich, poor, and people with disabilities. All human beings are accorded the same human dignity as human beings that should not be discriminated in society. All development should aim at promoting the well-being of all human beings without exception. Progress and

\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., p.3.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., pp.14-15.
development are meant for promoting human development or human well-being. Countries across the world are today shaping their ideas to see how they can attain human development among their citizens. It is this determination to improve people’s lives that has improved the human development index in many countries across the globe. Many countries have embraced pragmatic policies that respond to people’s local circumstances and opportunities, and states have been called upon to commit themselves to their important role in the development process for both their citizens and countries. States have the responsibility of improving human development by supporting education and social welfare and also to open up to trade and innovation. Human development cannot be achieved if nations do not address issues such as equity, voice, accountability, environmental risks and changing demography.

The idea of human development is further reinforced by Amartya Sen, who holds that in embracing progress, people should treat human beings as ends and not as means to other ends, as it is the case with the human capital theorists. There is a paradigm shift from the development that focuses only on the economic success to the one that focuses on the well-being of human beings. In that case, human progress and development become tools to promote human well-being and not ends themselves. Opportunities must be provided to all people without exception so that they can improve their living

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conditions and well-being.\textsuperscript{185} This could explain the reason why United Nations Development Program has focused on measuring the development of countries using the human development index that looks at health, standard of living, and education.\textsuperscript{186}

**Capability/Capabilities**

Capabilities have to do with the opportunities or the freedoms people have to do and be different things. It can also be rephrased as the person’s freedom to choose different ways of living. In the context of this inquiry the capabilities of children and youth means that they are able to look at different options in life from which they can make choices of what they want to do and be. An environment has to be created to ensure that there are no unfreedoms or stumbling blocks to stop them from doing or being the different things they want to do and to be. People’s well-being is judged by looking at the capabilities or real opportunities they have to live a life they value. It is the capabilities people have that enable them to do and be different things in life.\textsuperscript{187}

Education plays a role of expanding people’s freedoms and enhancing their capabilities. People need education to be able to convert what they are able to do and be (capabilities) into better living conditions and well-being. It is not enough for people to have capabilities. They must also acquire an education that can enable them to convert their capabilities into their desired functionings. From this perspective, policy makers, need to consider what people are capable of doing and being and then design policies that can enhance people’s capabilities to enable them live better lives and improve their well-

\textsuperscript{186} UNDP, *Human Development index*.
\textsuperscript{187} Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 75.
being. The process of enhancing people’s capabilities can be through different ways such as exposing them to learning opportunities, getting them practicing certain activities, and also through education and training.\textsuperscript{188}

In addressing the issue of human capabilities, there is need to pay attention to human diversity. People in society are different and are endowed with a diversity of capabilities that demand different processes of enhancing them (capabilities). This is why, for instance, in case of education, an education system has to be designed in such a way that it provides all children an opportunity to make choices from the available education alternatives. This is the kind of education that the HDCA advocates for. Human diversity demands that people should not be tied to schooling as the only way through which people can enhance their capabilities; other ways to enhance capabilities are available depending on which capabilities one needs to enhance. All people have to be given opportunities to develop their capabilities and to decide freely in the way they select what they consider to be their valuable capabilities. All this demands that they possess a certain level of freedom and education that can help them in developing their capabilities to achieve their well-being. The important fact to note here is that capabilities and freedom in the capability approach are interrelated.\textsuperscript{189} I could further argue that freedom can also imply being able to have an education system that helps individuals to recognize their capabilities.

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
Freedom

The conceptualization of freedom in the capability approach holds that we can only judge whether people are successful or not by looking at the kind of freedoms they enjoy to do and be what they have reason to value. People cannot do or be what they have reason to value in life when there are unfreedoms (using Amartya Sen’s language) or constraints that block their way from doing or being what they have reason to value. It is therefore important to identify the unfreedoms that hinder people from doing and being what they have reason to value, so that they can freely make their choices of what they want to do and be and have reason to value. People are more likely to achieve when constraints that stop them from achieving what they value are removed from their way. The statement “have reason to value” in the capability approach has also to be well understood. In the capability approach, the statement “have reason to value” means that individuals come to their valuable capabilities through a serious reflective process, from which they are able to make informed choices. This is where I think that having reason to value demands that one possesses a certain level of education that will enable him/her to carry out a reflective exercise and be able to come up with an informed choice.

The concept of freedom is important for having processes that can facilitate the enhancement of people’s capabilities; and countries need to ensure that there is always a favorable environment for all people to have the freedom to do things or become states of being that they consider more meaningful in their lives. It is freedom that provides the

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190 Sen, Development as Freedom, 18.
opportunities to people in society so that they can accomplish what they value in their
day-to-day life. It is, for instance, difficult to talk of education for development when
children and youth are not free to embrace the education they need for their well-being. It
is the many unfreedoms that people experience in their different environments that make
it difficult for them to improve their conditions of living and well-being.\textsuperscript{192}

The way people conceptualize freedom and the value system differs from
individual to individual. The fallacy that all people aim to achieve the same functioning
denies the differences among people’s notion of freedom and their value system. For
instance, children and youth in societies may have similar freedoms, opportunities, and
capability sets and yet achieve different functionings. People function differently because
of their differences such as in the way they make their choices, the kind of lifestyles to
which they are aspiring, and the resources they have at their disposal to make what they
want to achieve possible.\textsuperscript{193} Even Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences
supports the same idea of people possessing different competencies or intelligences
(verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial-visual, bodily-kinesthetic, musical,
interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist and existential) because of their unique aptitude set
of capabilities and the way they prefer to demonstrate their intellectual capabilities. In
fact the world needs this diversity of capabilities and skills to be able to function in many
different capacities in society. It is this blend of capabilities and skills that keep activities

\textsuperscript{192} Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, op.cit. 18.
moving in companies, organization and societies. In addition, it is not a guarantee that when people get the freedoms they value, that their quality of life will improve. People may have the freedoms, and yet fail to improve their conditions of life and their well-being.

Conceptualizing freedom in designing policies is very important because freedom is about the capabilities individuals have to do things they have reason to value. The poverty witnessed in many parts of the world has a lot to do with the deprivation of human freedom in terms of lack of education, health services, and adequate income plus other services whose absence make people less free. Such unfreedoms become big obstacles to people to improve their conditions of life. I think that the knowledge of the freedoms people have to become or do what they want to do is very important for policymakers because it gives them the foundation of designing policies that will be relevant to people. However, individuals also ought to live their lives responsibly.

**Functioning**

The concept of functioning in the capability approach can be well understood in relation to well-being. People have what they value doing (activities) or what they value being (states of being). The valued doings and valued beings that make people’s well-being is what is called functionings. The understanding of well-being in this context is not only limited to what people consume, but also to the activities people do and states of

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196 Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, op.cit. 56.
197 Ibid. 4.
beings that people are. Some of the activities and states of beings that make people’s well-being include: having food, having drinking water, being health, being calm, being safe, having a warm friendship, having an educated mind, having a good job, having a comfortable shelter, possessing self-respect, and having an enhanced human dignity.

There are very many activities done and states of being that people become that make up their well-being being, but these are just a few examples. When people’s need for an activity or state of being is met, they enjoy the functioning of achieving that particular activity or state of being. Functioning can be seen in terms of what people do, become or consume. Functioning cannot be limited to any of the three but to products, activities and states of being that make people’s well-being. The assumption is that people arrive at functionings through serious reflection and informed choices. From the capability approach perspective, it is the functionings such as being literate, feeling secure in a place, having good health, having enough to eat, drinking clean water and having an educated mind that are indicators of human well-being in society. Societies are able to determine their people’s well-being by looking at what people do and are (functionings). The above functionings and other unmentioned functionings are very crucial for improving the quality of life of people. People cannot dream of having a good quality of life when they are illiterate, unhealthy, without food and drinking water, and when they are without an educated mind. People have a lot of things they can do, and many states of being they can be, as long as they have a conducive environment for

enhancing capabilities. The challenge is always on the ability of people to convert their potential functionings (capabilities) into achieved functionings. This demands an education that can facilitate the transition from capabilities to the desired functionings.  

I think that the other argument that would enrich the discussion on functionings is to find out whether these functionings are self-determined, or they are sometimes determined by the environment, state and other entities in society.

**Well-being**

Well-being and capabilities relate to each other. They relate in a way that when we are evaluating the well-being of individuals, we have to look at their capabilities or the opportunities they have to lead a life they value. Well-being is not about how much of the riches individuals have amassed or commodity that they command, it is about the kind of life they are living and what they are succeeding in doing and being. In fact, the main objective of development from the capability approach perspective is human well-being. In that case, incomes and economic growth are instruments that can facilitate the process of human well-being. The concept of development from the capability approach is more than the expansion of income and wealth and main focus is on people’s well-being. Policies in societies or nations need to attend to the well-being of people because that is when they will promote their human development. The challenge is that there are different perspectives of well-being in society which makes it difficult to decide

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whose well-being is to be considered in designing policies in nations that are meant to promote human development.\textsuperscript{202}  

Well-being is a focus for all human beings because this is what they are looking for when they engage in talks about their desire to live a happy and meaningful life, their life goals and all they want to achieve in future. Our thoughts, feelings and behaviors are related to things we value and aspire to, and so, all our actions are focused on the attainment of these goals we want to achieve in the future.\textsuperscript{203} Research findings from countries such as Peru, Thailand, Ethiopia and Bangladesh on what people consider as their well-being reveals that people from these countries have things they consider as well-being, and these include: health, food, water, education, sanitation, room/house, salaried work, good family relations and a good living environment. An understanding of what people consider as their well-beings can guide governments and policy makers in designing policies that can address people’s needs and concerns.\textsuperscript{204}  

I think that governments and policy makers in any sector have got a task of finding out what well-being means for people in their society, so that they can design policies that will aim at improving their well-being. In addition, it is not enough for governments and policy-makers to know their people’s well-being; the people themselves must have the capability to discern what well-being for them is, and also willing to aspire to that well-being they consider will improve their quality of life.

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Agency

The concept of agency is crucial in the capability approach framework because one of the goals of human development is to enable individuals become agents not only in their own lives but also in societies in which they live. Individuals are looked at as dignified persons that are responsible for shaping their own lives in the direction of the goals they want to achieve. Human development because it brings out the fact that individual persons are dignified and are responsible to shape their lives in the direction of the goals they want to achieve. People have to be seen actively involved in their countries’ developmental processes, rather than being mere passive participants in their own development and the development of their countries. With agency in place, people are able to see themselves as having power to depend on themselves to influence what they are to do, to become and to think. Agency means that people are in control of what they want to achieve in their life. 205 People need to be of a mature age and of a certain level of reasoning if they are to make right decisions that will lead to a better life for them. Children and youth across the globe need opportunities to be able to shape their own destiny. The assumption is that with agency people can bring change in their lives and to their environment or communities. 206 The challenge is that in many countries people are not empowered with the agency they need to make choices that can help them

206 Sen, Development as Freedom, 19.
navigate comfortably through life.\textsuperscript{207} Conceptualizing agency within policy design and reforms could be of use since it considers individuals’ ability to act according to what they value or what they consider to be in line with what they consider to be good.\textsuperscript{208}

The concept of agency is related to several other concepts such as self-determination, autonomy, self-direction, self-reliance, empowerment, and voice. Self-determination is where individuals are able to make independent choices that affect their lives. With self-determination, people are in full control of their lives and they can set their goals and be inspired to work toward achieving them. They also have the ability to work independently to improve their quality of life.\textsuperscript{209} With agency, people do not only acquire the competence of self-determination but also of other competencies such as autonomy, empowerment, self-direction, self-reliance and voice. Individuals need these competences so that they can use them to achieve human development.\textsuperscript{210} The integration of such concepts in countries’ policies could promote a certain level of freedom among people so that they are able to aspire to enhance their capabilities and achieve their aspirations. People can only exercise their agency in a society where there is freedom for people to act on their choices. This is obviously not the case in many countries. The

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., 19.
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danger with such approach to life is that it can promote selfishness and neglect of others in society.

**The Key Two Versions of the Capability Approach**

There are two key pioneers of the capability approach that should be put into consideration in this study. The two pioneers are Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Each of these two has contributed to the development of the capability approach, and so deserves recognition in the scholarship of the capability approach framework. A look at each version of the capability approach separately will enable the readers not only to understand the capability approach framework, but also to understand where each of these pioneers is coming from in his/her argument.

**Amartya Sen’s Version of Capability Approach**

There are many people across continents whose lives are deprived in terms of food, health, clean water, and good housing facilities. Such people deserve the kind of development that Amartya Sen advocates for, which is a development that puts people first in its developmental processes. This kind of development focuses on expanding what people are able to do and be and have reason to value. The development that promotes the real freedoms of people by considering whom they are, what they do, and the geographical set up in which they live.\(^{211}\) In Sen’s capability approach, there is much emphasis on human diversity, in a sense that people are different, and because they are different, they do not value the same things. However, from Sen’s capability approach,

all citizens must be given opportunity to participate fully in the decision making processes that will affect their lives, and they should be able to determine the kind of development they need to improve their quality of life. People have got what they are capable of doing and being, and governments and policy makers have to design policies and reforms that will enhance those capabilities and enable them to have the freedom they need to pursue the future they have reason to value. The issue here is that people cannot develop their capabilities and make life choices if they do not have the ability to live the kind of life they would want to live. Freedom is important for people to make choices that are meaningful to them. This is the reason why the capability approach to development demands Governments and policy makers to focus on enabling people especially those deprived to expand their agency and freedom so that they can enhance their capabilities and choose to pursue the future they want to achieve. Human agency and freedom play a very important role in enhancing human capabilities. In places where countries have poor populations, Sen argues that those poor people are in that state of poverty because they have been deprived of basic capabilities. For him it is not that they have low incomes, but are deprived of basic capabilities. The way to help them come out of that situation would be to expand their freedoms so that they can do and be what they value. People in deprived states such as poverty cannot pool out of such situations unless policies and reforms in governments address the unfreedoms that keep

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212 Andersson et al. op.cit. 2.
blocking these people from developing their capabilities and making choices to pursue the future they value. Some of the unfreedoms that governments and policy makers have to look into to empower their citizens include: poverty, tyranny in oppressive governments, freedom to satisfy hunger, illness, systematic social deprivation, and intolerance as witnessed in repressive states, especially in developing countries. These unfreedoms, plus many others restrict many people across the globe from participating in the social, political, and economic life of communities.215 I find that Some of the unfreedoms that Sen mentions in his capability approach (such as sufficient nutrition, adequate food, shelter, adequate clothing, clean water and remedy for treatable diseases) are known to many governments, and yet they do little to remove those obstacles for those who want to make their life better.216 I would argue that probably people would need to start looking at some of the ways through which people can use to convince governments to minimize these unfreedoms that block their way to what they want to achieve.

By using the Capability approach from Sen’s perspective, individuals, communities and governments are able to see not only the human-centeredness that Sen’s capability approach brings to the discussion, but also what other approaches to development such as human capital can contribute to designing policies in different sectors of a nation. In his version of capability approach, Sen sees capability approach and human capital approach as complementing each other to produce strong policies for

215 Sen, Development as Freedom, op.cit. 3-4.
216 Ibid.
development. This version of capability approach emphasizes the fact that human capital approach is very important because it augments human agency production possibilities. People in any country cannot have a variety of production possibilities unless they acquire knowledge and skills that will empower them to be productive in a variety of ways. For countries willing to embrace the human capability approach as a framework to policy formulation, it is not enough to become productive and earn more income. People need to have the opportunity to do what they want to do and be what they want to be in life, provided they arrive at this decision through a reflective process. From this perspective, policies can be meaningful or relevant as long as they enable people to live the lives they have reason to value. The capability approach sees the interrelatedness and complementarity of capability approach and human capital approach as crucial in enabling human beings achieve and acquire the abilities they need to function in society. The issue of economic production and human well-being are all addressed in the capability approach. The capability approach becomes more important as a framework or model because it considers both economic and non-economic perspectives of development. Sen’s capability approach pushes Governments and policy makers to go beyond economic purposes of development to considering other aspects of life that make up people’s well-being.\textsuperscript{217}

\textbf{Martha Nussbaum’s Version of Capability Approach}

First of all, it is Nussbaum who gives several names to the approach that include: human development approach, capability approach and capabilities approach. These

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid. 292-294.
names refer to the same approach. Secondly, to understand Nussbaum’s version of capability approach, there is need to understand the type of questions Nussbaum asks as she begins the exploration of the capability approach. Nussbaum’s version of capability approach begins with a very simple question: “What are people actually able to do and to be? She (Nussbaum) proceeds to the second question: “What real opportunities are available to them?” In her first question, she wants to know what people are actually able to do and to be. This is a question that all governments and policy-makers need to ask before they can start designing policies or reforms of any kind. Countries that fail to know what their people are actually able to do and to be can make their policies or reforms irrelevant to their populations. Nussbaum’s second question is about the real opportunities available for people in communities or nations. Governments and policy makers need to ask the same question of knowing the real opportunities that are available for the people they think should benefit from the designed policies or reforms. If countries, in addressing issues of education do not design policies and reforms according to the real opportunities available, they can either provide unwanted human resources or provide an irrelevant education to their populations. For Nussbaum, it is the failure of governments to address the needs and concerns of their people that has led to the failure of social, economic and human development in many parts of the world. I imagine that this could perhaps also explain the failure of education reform initiatives in many countries.

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218 Nussbaum, Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach, ix.
From the capability approach perspective, governments and partners in policy formation and implementation are called upon to identify capabilities and people’s opportunity structure in their communities. Once they have found out what people are able to do and to be and the opportunities they have at their disposal, they can minimize their deprivations by providing them with empowering policies that will enable them to enhance their capabilities.\textsuperscript{219}

Nussbaum’ version of capability approach aligns most closely with human rights-based approaches; however, she argues that human rights-based approaches are not fully integrated theories and that capabilities approach is broader including issues of gender, race, and relationship to environment. Nussbaum find a very strong relationship between capability approach and human rights, and this is mainly in relation to entitlements. This is especially in promoting the ideas that all human beings by virtue of their humanity have core entitlements that the society has a duty to respect and support. In this version of capability approach, entitlements are not only limited to human beings but also extended to nonhuman animals.\textsuperscript{220}

However, there is need to pay attention to the rhetoric of human right-based approaches to policies. A typical example of the human rights-based approaches to policies is the Human rights-based approach to education that commits itself to advocate for every child a decent education, but the experience in many developing countries shows that governments legally grant the right to education to every child, but very few

\textsuperscript{219} Nussbaum, op.cit. 2006: 75.
\textsuperscript{220} Nussbaum, Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach, p. 62.
fulfill that responsibility. People can only trust human rights-based approaches to policy as long as they are sure that governments will commit themselves to respecting and protecting the right to education of every child.\footnote{Robeynes, “Three Models of Education: Rights, Capabilities and Human Capital,” Theory and Research in Education, (2006): 76. doi: 10.1177/1477878506060683} What Nussbaum is bringing to the attention of governments and policy-makers is that there are always barriers which bring inequalities of well-being among people and these include: social class, race, gender, culture and disability. Such barriers need to be addressed by governments as they design policies for their people’s well-being.\footnote{Melanie Walker, “A Human Capabilities Framework for evaluating students’ learning,” Teaching in Higher Education 13, no. 4. (2008): 484.}

The concept of entitlement is very important in Nussbaum’s version of capability approach and this is why she holds governments accountable to make sure that people’s core entitlements are protected to enhance their well-being. She thinks that if these core entitlements are discussed and put in the countries’ constitutions, then people can have the freedom to do and be what they value. This is the same ideology she uses in her central capabilities where she argues that every individual need to have those 10 central capabilities. For Nussbaum, central capabilities should be seen as entitlements in every country, and governments should make sure that they are respected and protected. This would be a way to protect all those groups that are discriminated against because of issues such as gender, disability, socioeconomic status, or geographical location.\footnote{Nussbaum, Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach op.cit. 62.}

From Nussbaum’s perspective, policies need not to be discriminative because all human beings are of the same worth. There is no single person, group, community or
tribe that should claim to be of more worth than others. Given that people are of the same worth, then, they all command equal respect because of their nature as human beings. This means that all children and youth need the same attention in policy formulation despite their differences in terms of resources, rationality and other human limitations. Once governments respect the concept of humanity and how it demands dignity and respect for every individual citizen, then policies that promote human well-being can make sense in the policy-making process, and governments will respect all children and youth and commit themselves to fulfill the right to protect their entitlements.224

I think that Nussbaum’s version of capability approach addresses very important issues such as human dignity and equality of all human beings, but I think that it can work well in places where governments respect human rights. The reason is that in countries where they respect human rights, Governments and the people can easily discuss the core capabilities and probably choose what they think can serve them in their countries, and also make sure that they are implemented. The challenge is with governments which do not respect human rights and which do not look at human dignity as something important to all humanity. There are obviously countries where leaders do not care whether their citizens acquire the central capabilities or not. I think that human rights-based approaches depend so much on the good will of the leaders in governments. This approach to policies may not work effectively in countries with dictatorial governments.

**Capability Approach and Education**

There are many scholars of the capability approach that have linked capability approach with education. In this study, I will limit myself to two capability approach scholars that have done much of their work on the African continent. The two scholars suggested for this study are Elaine Unterhalter and Melanie Walker. The knowledge of the studies they have done could give some insights on how the capability approach could enrich education policy in countries where it has not taken much root.

Unterhalter and Walker do not only look at capability approach as a general normative framework for assessing human development, but they also look at what it has to offer to evaluations of specific areas of social policy, such as education. They acknowledge the fact that the capability approach framework has attracted international interest from all people in different forms of education (formal, informal and nonformal). There is generally a strong belief among people that the capability approach has much power to contribute to people’s ideas, policies and practices. This section looks at Unterhalter and Walker’s scholarship in relating capability approach and education.

**Elaine Unterhalter’s Perception of Using the Capability Approach in Education**

Elaine Unterhalter, like other human development scholars advocates for the capability approach to education because it focuses on what people are able to do and be,
and have reason to value. She emphasizes the fact that the evaluation of a well-functioning education should not be seen in terms of the volumes of commodities or resources but in how it is expanding people’s freedoms to be and do what they value. In that case, education’s concern should not be so much of the number of teachers in a school, textbooks, scores in examinations, how much skills individuals have developed, or how well people have performed in PISA (Programme for International Students Assessment) tests. Instead, evaluation should to be about the range of positive freedoms and the opportunities which people have to do and be what they value. People should be the opportunity to make choices that they think will enable them to do and be what they value. In the capability approach context, education should not only concentrate on individual learning outcomes but also on the range of real educational choices that are available to people. The question to ask in the education environment is to know whether individuals had genuine capabilities to achieve their valued educational functionings. Education policy makers and governments need to make sure that the education they provide will help people to achieve their desired functionings. Policy makers have even to look into the range of valued learning opportunities that are provided to the low income communities from which they can choose the type of education that is of value to

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Unterhalter further argues that there is usually a tendency of many governments and policy-makers to design education policies and reforms focusing on the well-being of communities, while forgetting individuals. She suggests that governments and education policy makers consider enhancing capabilities both at the individual and community levels so that both individuals and communities can enhance their capabilities to achieve their goals. She argues that governments and policy makers have to consider whether individuals and communities value the kind of education provided by government. Governments and policy makers have to make an effort to know whether what people say they are able to do and be is coming from their own willing, or it is something they have adopted from the significant others. Governments and policy-makers should be in position to evaluate the agency and freedom their citizens have to value education. It is not enough to value education; people must be having the ability to convert their capabilities into valued achievements.

Unterhalter calls upon Governments and policy makers to pay attention to the issue of capability constraints. The constraints always make it difficult for people to enhance their capabilities. The capability approach takes the issue of capability constraints so serious and that is why the first step in formulating education policies or reforms is to remove obstacles so that all young people can benefit from the education is being provided by education service providers. Young people in the education sector

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cannot achieve their goals when there are blocks on their way that prevent them from what they want to achieve in life. Unterhalter argues that all partners in education and governments ought to be conscious of the obstacles or constraints against capabilities of children and youth in their countries so that they can always remove them from their way so that they can enhance their capabilities. If we take an example of schooling, the obstacles in many countries include: low economic status, long distance to school, lack of facilities, ill-health, pregnancy, parents withdrawing their children from schools, early marriages and lack of better qualified teachers. Policy makers and their governments must always put into consideration the fact that such constraints can block many children and youth from achieving enhancing their capabilities and achieving their aspirations.

Many children and youth, especially in the developing world have a strong sense of what they can do and be, but many cannot enhance their capabilities to achieve their desired functionings because of these obstacles that some governments and policy makers tend to ignore. The study that Unterhalter et al. carried out in South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria showed how because of capability constraints some children and youth were frustrated because of failing to enhance their capabilities. There are many children who, after failing to enhance their capabilities leave it to whoever can come for their rescue or the leave everything to divine intervention. This is usually the case with financial constraints. From the capability approach perspective, Governments, education policy makers and all partners in education need to know that children and youth in all nations have capabilities, but the challenge they face is that many do not have the capability to
understand the obstacles they face completing their education or achieving the kind of jobs they want to reach for.\textsuperscript{230}

In relating capabilities approach and education, Unterhalter argues that government and stakeholders in education need to make a distinction between schooling and education. The argument is that capabilities are not only enhanced by schooling as a form of education but also by other forms of education. All citizens, especially children and youth, need an education that can equip them with the agency to use their reflection, the capability to use information, and to understand issues and recognize their right to these capacities that can help them to enjoy the style of life they value.\textsuperscript{231} When citizens in their countries fail to get such kind of education, they tend to become powerless and limited in confidence, which eventually puts them in a marginalized state where they cannot participate in making decisions that can improve their situation.\textsuperscript{232} I think that the failure of citizens in their countries to receive an education that can enhance their capabilities and achieve their aspirations remains a very big obstacle to people’s expected outcomes from education processes.

Unterhalter also brings to the discussion the issue where Governments and policy makers tend to concentrate on education inputs at the expense of the well-being of individual learners in their educational institutions. What people need most from


\textsuperscript{232} Narayan et al. \textit{Voices of the Poor: Crying out for Change}, op.cit. 237.
education is what will enable them to improve their quality of life and not how much institutions or governments invest in educational institutions. The capability approach puts human beings at the center of the education process and not the education inputs. The education inputs are important but they should be the means to the end, which is the well-being of the learners. Unterhalter notices the challenge in the contemporary world where education focuses mostly on the forms of curriculum, teaching school management and learning resources to see how they facilitate educational improvement in terms of examination results or skills sets that an economy demands and not on improving the lives of the people.\footnote{Melanie Walker and Elaine Unterhalter, “The Capability Approach: Its Potential for Work in Education,” in \textit{Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education}, M.Walker and E.Unterhalter (Eds.), New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2007): 2.}

Finally, Unterhalter et al. raise a very important issue that governments, education policy-makers and all partners in education need to address. This is the question of traditional beliefs and practices that can limit children and youth or even adults from acquiring the knowledge they need for their well-being. In such circumstances, social arrangements can be reorganized so that children, youth and adults are guided in a way that will enhance their capabilities for their well-being.\footnote{Unterhalter, Vaughan, and walker, “The Capability Approach and education,” \textit{Prospero}, (2007): 1.} Governments and education policy designers or reformers need always to be conscious of the fact that culture, capabilities and aspirations are closely linked. People who are socially brought up in a culture that has a big influence on their capabilities and aspirations can affect the ways such people determine their values and how they perceive well-being. This eventually
influences the way they determine the capabilities they will aspire to, the lifestyle they value and the reasons for which they value activities and states of being.  

I think that in countries where there are strong cultural beliefs, norms, and traditions; all partners in education could work out a system by which negative elements of culture that limit people’s ambitions or aspirations can be deconstructed to make conditions favorable for children and youth especially those from deprived environments benefit by the education system in their countries.

**Melanie Walker and Capabilities Education**

Walker views capabilities as one of the normative models for education policy. Her interest is in seeing how capabilities education is related to policy, practices and outcomes that can improve lives by reducing injustice and building societies which value capabilities for all. Walker is inspired by Amartya Sen, with his human capabilities model of education policy which puts human lives at the center of development and the focus of education as the promotion of people’s capabilities and functionings to choose a good life. Walker advocates for capability-friendly education policies because they have a richer view of what it means to be human. The issue here is not so much of changing completely the education system but to look at education from a different perspective by focusing on what human beings require to have a flourishing life.

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235 Ibrahim, “*Poverty, aspirations and well-being: afraid to aspire and unable to reach a better life - Voices from Egypt*,” 9.


237 Ibid. 388.

Walker further brings into the discussion of the capability approach the issue of the interconnectedness between capability approach and aspirations. She sees aspiration as one of the capabilities that people need to be motivated to those things they want to achieve. It is natural that human beings as individuals or groups have the capability to aspire to things such as learning, succeeding, or aiming at a better life or better things. In that case, any education policy to be relevant to its people must help to develop people’s capability to aspire because that is the way they can fully immerse themselves in thinking of their future plans and enhancing their capabilities to achieve those plans. It is the capacity to aspire that motivates people to be future-oriented. This future-oriented perspective can enable them to embrace education with an aim to achieve what they are aspiring to in life. I think that an education system or reform that does not promote the interconnectedness between aspirations and capabilities may fail learners to achieve or succeed in the kind of life they value to live or the activities they value doing, hence the interrelatedness between aspirations, capabilities and aspirations.

Walker argues that the statement ‘reason to value’ is always associated with the capability approach framework. This statement is important because all people have what they value in life, but the challenge is that what is truly valuable is open to discussion in the capability approach. This is relevant especially in policy formulation. It is difficult to design a policy that addresses all the values that people have. This would mean that the values of every individual person in communities or nations would be integrated in the policy, which is not practical. For walker people cannot achieve a better quality of life if

239 Ibid, 190.
they have no motivation for it, which means that they must have something they are aspiring to that will motivate them to work toward it. This is the reason why Walker thinks that aspiration is a very important capability in designing policies of education. Governments and all partners in education need to find ways to motivate their learners so that they can look forward to being successful or having a better quality of life. As people go through education, they should have something ahead of them which they want to achieve. People need to be future-oriented to be able to achieve what they aspire to in life. An education system that does not focus on the future that children and youth hope for will not meet their needs. This is the reason why it is important for children, youth and their parents/guardians to know the purpose for which they are having an education.

Walker sees in the capability approach the interconnected between development, freedom and quality of life. All education stakeholders need to know that children and youth must not only value what they want to do and be, they must also have the freedom to do and become all those things they value. Walker brings to our attention the fact that that development, freedom and quality of life work together to facilitate the well-being of human beings. This is why it is important that people have other alternative functionings for which they have the freedom to achieve. This requires that governments and education policy makers find ways to integrate quality of life, freedom and development

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to be able to provide an education for well-being.\textsuperscript{242} Walker recommends that Governments and all stakeholders in education ask themselves of the kind of world and society they would want to work and live in, and then look at how education can help in creating that kind of world. This vision of the world will eventually give rise to the different education policies such as human capital or capabilities approach.\textsuperscript{243} This means that all the inputs in education are directed to creating a better world or society for all citizens.\textsuperscript{244} From this perspective, it would mean that governments and partners in education explore together to come up with policy designs and educational practices that will empower people in their nations to work toward this better world for individuals and communities.\textsuperscript{245}

From Walker’s perspective, education is also viewed as a capability which has a big impact on the formation of valuable capabilities especially among the deprived populations. The most important thing in matters of education is that people are able to receive an education that will help them to enhance their valued capabilities.

Governments and policy makers have the obligation to provide an education system that will develop and improve the quality of life of their citizens. It serves no purpose for countries to have education systems that do not improve the lives of their people. However, this demands that governments and policy-makers know how people in their


nations identify themselves, the kind of abilities they have that are valued or devalued, and what their people consider as possible to achieve.  

Walker advocates for the idea that individual persons have several capabilities. She argues that it would be a risk to design an education policy that would limit an individual to one particular direction. She sees this worldview as open to discussion, especially in cases where an education policy is designed to produce particular kinds of people. She makes reference to the tendency of many young people in different countries to think that the only thing they can aspire to is higher education and not any other education alternative. Individuals possess a diversity of capabilities and so, it would be unfair to oneself to reduce his/her capabilities to one particular capability. Paying attention to the diversity of our capabilities and aspirations can help us to avoid the disadvantages of specialization. Governments and policy designers need to help young people see the bigger picture of the alternative capabilities they have at their disposal so that they are not discouraged when one choice does not work for them. It is by using the lens of the capability approach that people can know their alternative capabilities that are equally important in their life.

**The Critique of Using the Capability Approach to Policy Design**

The first critique is addressed by Elaine Unterhalter, who argues that it is difficult to know the extent of freedom and capabilities children should have in education. Her concern is mainly that children tend to value things that are completely contrary to what

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would make their lives better at school. From this perspective, parents, guardians, teachers and others who are entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of children need to guide them so that they do not make decisions that will deprive them of their well-being or value the wrong things. Children are young and so they need guidance for proper decision making. She further argues that the institutions where people go to acquire education can also influence their values and aspirations. Since educational institutions have influence on the values and aspirations of individuals, the whole environment in an educational institution should be designed in such a way that it will foster young people’s aspiration and enhance their capabilities. The issue to keep in mind is the capability to autonomy that is developed through aspiration to make and act on well-informed and well-thought-out judgments about how people want to live their lives. Unterhalter further observes that in many countries capabilities of women are far from being expanded in many education systems. She gives an example of the education system in South Africa in which a high proportion of young black girls by attending school, are at risk of being sexually harassed of both their teachers and even their schoolmates. Although education is seen here as a capability that these girls would need to enhance their capabilities, the social environment is not favorable for their well-being because diseases or child pregnancies can destroy their capabilities. She argues that using the capability approach to evaluation demands that policy makers pay attention to

Unterhalter, Vaughan and Walker, op.cit. 7.
discriminatory conditions in societies such as race and gender. Another challenge that Unterhalter brings to the discussion is the assumption about uniformity of education. She argues that empirical evidence has shown that education, or at least formal schooling in particular context can be cases of capability deprivation, which demands that in operationalizing the capability approach, policy makers consider complementing the approach with social theories that can enable us to understand better the relations entailed by education and schooling). 250

Another serious challenge to the capability approach is made by Mozaffar Qizilbash, who argues that all capability approaches fail to provide an appropriate account of the improvements in the quality of life which must ground a view of human development. He attributes this failure to the fact that capability approach theorists are strong believers in pluralism. This is a school of thought which believes in the subjectivity of the notion of a good life. If good life is subjective, then the matter complicates the issue of policy formulation. The problem with such conceptualization of a good life is that it is undetermined, which makes the capability approach weak because people cannot aspire to something that is not determined. 251 The central challenge in that case is that policymakers and education reformers cannot do much in designing and implementing an education policy that will address the well-being of people when the well-being itself is not well-defined. Amartya Sen is more concerned with the freedom individuals have to make choices the value. In that case, he sees determining what a good

life is as interference in people’s freedom because it would mean that others have forced
the notion of good life on others. He does not believe that a good life should be
determined by some people to other people. This for him would be breaking the values of
democratic principles. 252

The other gap that is addressed on the capability approach is on Amartya Sen’s
conceptualization of the five instrumental freedoms (political freedoms, economic
facilities, social opportunities, transparent guarantees and protective security). Navarro
believes that the instrumental freedoms are important but argues that Sen’s analysis in the
instrumental freedoms is weak because he does not address the issue of the sources of
power in society and how its reproduction perpetuates underdevelopment in different
parts of the world. From Navarro’s argument, the capability approach needs to look into
the multiple sources of power that can prevent people from achieving their well-being.
His classification of powers such as class power, gender power, national power and other
powers that we can find in society can be a good beginning for analyzing the instrumental
freedoms that Sen believes could help people to achieve their well-being. Navarro brings
into discussion the issue of political context from which the power comes to give the
instrumental freedoms meaning. From this perspective, freedoms in a country are
inseparable from the political context. Power needs to be addressed in the capability
approach because it is one of the obstacles for people to develop their potential. Power of
any form can block people’s freedoms to become or do what they value. This is the case
mainly in the developing countries where governments and international agencies have a

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252 Sen, Development as Freedom, op.cit. 155.
lot of power on education policies. For Navarro, power can be used to promote people’s freedom to achieve their potential; however, it can also be used as a tool to restrain people from developing their capabilities. This is why it is important for governments, policy makers and all partners in education to analyze the sources of power that may be curtailing the freedoms of people and blocking them from enhancing their capabilities to achieve their potential. It is the same power that can be used to disempower educational institutions because it may not be in favor of educating the marginalized, deprived, discriminated, or curricula that would pool individuals out poverty.253 The common problem in some countries is to have authoritative governments that care less about basic interests of citizens. The power in many countries tend to be used by governments and policy makers to take care of the interests of urban groups and not making much effort to address the needs of the people in the disadvantaged areas of these countries.254 Navarro raises very important issues of the sources of power that can enrich the capability approach, but I think that Sen addresses some of these issues although not in a detailed way. From Sen’s perspective, there are many unfreedoms that prevent people from enhancing their capabilities one of these unfreedoms could be seen as power. If because of power, people are not able to do and become what they value, then power becomes an obstacle to enhancing their capabilities. Sen is a strong believer in people’s evaluation and public reasoning, whereby people have to constantly engage in reflected evaluation

and reasoning to find out what the unfreedoms are in their own environment.\textsuperscript{255} I think that Sen may not have talked of power directly, but we could see power implied in his use of terms such as freedom, inequality and agency. His emphasis remains on the question of freedom and how individuals or groups can find out what the sources of power are in their own communities, and how power is a hindrance to their well-being. However, this is not to underrate Navarro’s concern for the sources of power and how they can even affect educational institutions. Understanding the sources of power is crucial for governments and education policy makers and reformers to come up with education policies and reforms that accommodate all citizens.

The problem of power is also reflected in mass education. For instance, Saito argues that compulsory education does not necessarily enhance human capabilities because it usually focuses on competitiveness and not on capabilities. She reminds governments and partners in education the fact that compulsory education can be successful but without enhancing children’s capabilities. Children and youth in many parts of the world who study hard to perform well in their either local or international exams, and yet many of their capabilities are not enhanced. This is something the governments and education policy makers need to look into, whether education is for excelling in examination performance or enhancing the capabilities of learners. Saito is reacting to Sen’s position that compulsory education does necessarily enhance people’s

\textsuperscript{255} Sen, \textit{The Idea of Justice}, 241.
capabilities.\textsuperscript{256} It is not only competitiveness that can fail compulsory education to enhance children and youth’s capabilities but also politics. For instance, countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi introduced compulsory education as a manifesto commitment to the presidential election campaigns. Such decisions on matters of education have little to do with enhancing young people’s capabilities and aspirations. In countries where social opportunities such as education and health care are offered on condition that the electorate gives votes to a presidential candidate, people become victims of political circumstances because the system is not meant for their well-being.\textsuperscript{257}

This inquiry reveals that all people have what they are capable of being and doing in life (capabilities) and education has the role of enhancing those capabilities so that individuals are able to function in society the way they would prefer to function. However, having the capabilities and enhancing them does not mean much if those who possess capabilities are not motivated to the kind of life they would want to live. Since the ways of being, knowing, and aspiring are socially constructed, then it would be worthwhile to have all human institutions plan together to help enhance children and youth’s capabilities and foster their aspirations so that they can do or become what they value (their well-being).

The understanding of aspirations as that ability that individuals have of setting goals of what they want to achieve and being inspired in the present to put in whatever it takes to achieve those goals, it becomes clear that with aspirations, people stay focused


\textsuperscript{257} Stavage, op.cit. 54.
on what they want to achieve and they will always the means available that help them to get to what they want to achieve. The understanding of capabilities cannot also be neglected because people tend to succeed in what they are able to do and to be, which are; their capabilities and well-being is something that people would always enjoy experiencing. I find these concepts complementing each other. This is why I have suggested the Aspirations-Capability Approach model that I think could enrich the education systems that are already in place in different nations. The next section shows the relationship between aspirations and capabilities.

**Linking Aspirations and Capabilities**

I think that Sen’s version of capability approach is very important for countries that have an intention to improving the human well-being of their citizens. Capability approach has some important elements of development such as human-centeredness of a policy, individual freedom to do and be what one values, and the well-being of every individual person. One of the elements that would enrich Sen’s version of human development capability approach is the aspect of aspiration. A policy can be people-centered, people may have the freedom they need, but without having a vision/dream/goal or an aspiration they want to achieve, their well-being may not be achieved.

Aspirations from the development studies perspective is defined as the hope or ambition of achieving something. Many people have aspirations but in some cases, they are not sure whether it will work or not. It is the hope that it will work that keeps people

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focused on their aspirations. The other issue to keep in mind is that aspirations can either be expressed at the individual level or at a collective or group level. This means that aspirations are not only limited to individuals but they can also be an enterprise in which groups can engage. This implies that we can have aspirations as individuals, but we can also have aspirations as a collective group. There are areas like political organizations or other organizational systems where collective aspirations are important for those grouping their well-being as groups.259

Conradie and Robeyns suggest some two roles that aspirations play within the capability approach framework which I think can give us some insights into in the aspirations-capability approach model. These roles can help us not only to understand better the EHDCA but also why this model is important at this particular point in time especially in the design of education policies and reforms. The first role that aspirations play within the capability approach framework is the Capabilities-selecting role. It is when people as individuals or groups know their aspirations that they can start making choices on which capabilities they want to enhance to promote their human development. It is not worthwhile thinking of developing or enhancing one’s capabilities when you do not have the reason for which you are enhancing those capabilities. It is within that context that aspirations play that role of capabilities- selection. This brings out the interdependence that exists between aspirations and capabilities. The ability of people to express their aspirations and taking time reflecting upon those aspirations can enable

them to come up with a number of capabilities from their capability set that they value to be relevant to them. It is again by knowing people’s aspirations that you come to know what is in their capability set that has not been realized. In other words knowing individuals or groups’ aspirations reveals the capabilities that people have which have not been realized. This is why expressed aspirations are very important in any policy design or reform. This implies that in case of human well-being, governments or policy designers would need first all to know the kind of human well-being that the agents are aspiring to, which will help the policy makers to choose from people’s capabilities that that they need to enhance so as to achieve the human well-beings they are aspiring to. Aspirations can help in knowing which capabilities of people are valuable and relevant to what they want to achieve in terms of human well-being.260

Conradie and Robeyns suggest the second role that aspirations play in the capability approach framework. They name this role as agency-unlocking. There is always need to unlock agency if change is to happen in families, communities, schools and society at large. The way people engage in thinking, talking and reflecting about aspirations in collective unities such as families and other organizational groups is very important. This engagement is very important because it brings in a supportive network where people are encouraged and motivated to use their latent agency to make changes in their lives and expand their capabilities. Reflection on aspirations does not need to be abstract; it has to be translated into action. Once people have identified their aspirations, then, with agency unlocked they can come together and put their governments under

260 Ibid., 565.
pressure to improve their capabilities. The other alternative is that they can organize themselves and form self-help groups which can enable them to enhance their capabilities. When people agency is unlocked, they can always come up with alternatives that they think will be better for them. Aspirations can only play their capabilities-selecting and agency-unlocking roles only if people’s aspirations have not adapted circumstances such as deep poverty or unjust social structures. In a situation where people’s aspirations have adapted circumstances such as deep poverty or unjust social structures, it is difficult to talk of using aspirations as a tool to enhance human development. The rationale, in this case, is that people with low aspirations have a tendency to believe that certain opportunities are not meant for them, which is not always true. The issue of adaptation is always a challenge in using aspiration as a tool to enhance people’s human development.261

The main aim of the capability approach is to expand people’s beings and doings that they have reason to value. The challenge remains that once people have adapted to certain circumstances, the issue of doing and becoming what they have reason to value may not make much if they are pulled down by those adapted circumstances. The whole process of valuation of aspirations and capabilities is vulnerable to people’s adaptation to circumstances. The tendency is that people who have limited ambitions, wishes or preferences, will be modest in the way they formulate the capabilities they find valuable. This is the same rationale with aspirations in a sense that people, who have, adapted

aspirations, will only have modest goals, ambitions and hopes, even in situations where they have more valuable options open to them.\textsuperscript{262}

The study of the link between aspiration and capabilities show that the two concepts complement each other in promoting human development. The approach sees that people always have to be focused on what they want to achieve, but at the same time, they must have the ability to do what they have set out to do, and to be what they have set out to be. Further, aspirations and capabilities are also not enough, there is need to integrate them with notions of human capital and human rights. This complementarity of aspirations, human capabilities and notions of human capital and human rights make up the EHDCA that I am suggesting as one that could make a strong foundation for education policy makers of reformers.

It is important to use the EHDCA model, first to evaluate existing institutions and practices so that policy and reforms can be formulated on the basis of the existing resources and constraints by policy makers.

\textbf{Essentials of the Enhanced HDCA Conceptualization of a Model}

The enhanced HDCA model is the model that is suggested as a new approach to education especially in the developing world. The essential elements within this model include: aspirations, human capabilities, notions of human capital and human rights. Having looked at all the four elements in the previous chapters, it is important to conceptualize how they work together and under what circumstances.

\textsuperscript{262} Conradie and Robeyns, “Aspirations and Human Development Interventions,” 566.
In the enhanced HDCA, individuals are encouraged to identify their aspirations or be helped by professionals to identify their aspirations. Aspirations have to be understood in terms of contexts in which people live.\textsuperscript{263} This obviously goes against the traditional way where students are guided towards the aspirations predetermined by government policy.\textsuperscript{264} At the same time, we have to recognize that some people have adaptive aspirations and capabilities that may be de-rather than constructive, constitute unfreedoms,-may result in “deformed” adaptive preferences that rigidify disadvantages.\textsuperscript{265} A number of scholars such as Ina and Robeyns advocate for an engagement with a thorough public debate by stakeholders in any program or policy that is being designed, and also scrutinizing people’s aspirations and preferences to make sure that they do not become obstacles to capability development among people.\textsuperscript{266}

Governments can play a big role in establishing policies and reforms that can help people develop their capabilities and achieve their aspirations, but the problem with government policies is that they at times focus their attention on a linear model of aspirations growth which basically concentrates on educational outcomes in terms of grades and credentials. This approach to education neglects the changing nature of young people’s aspirations and assumes that young people’s aspirations are static and not dynamic. The narrow linear system cannot give all young people the opportunity to make adjustments in their aspirations depending on circumstances, talents, resources and other factors that cause dynamism in aspirations. Using the enhanced HDCA, people who aim at driving forward

\textsuperscript{263} Appadurai, op.cit. p. 67.
\textsuperscript{264} Hart, \textit{Aspirations, Education and Social Justice}, 85.
\textsuperscript{265} Nussbaum, 2000.
\textsuperscript{266} Conradie and Robeyns, \textit{Aspirations and Human Development Interventions}, 563.
more holistic strategies may develop both their individual capability to aspire as well as capabilities to realize aspirations. However, for youth the model demands that education institutions have professionals in careers guidance that can help young people to develop their aspirations.267

The other essential element of the enhanced HDCA is the notion of human capital development. First of all, it is important to note that human capital focuses on instrumental and economic importance of education and that it aims at providing education for knowledge and skills for social and private returns. There is nothing wrong to approach education from the perspective of being instrumental for providing economic benefits. However, for education among deprived populations, human capital development theory needs to be complemented with the capability approach; mainly due to intrinsic and non-economic constraints and opportunities.268 The notion of human capital in any education policy design or reform is important because human capital facilitates the expansion of basic capabilities in terms of knowledge, skills, improved prosperity and social services. Education policy makers and reformers need not to limit themselves to economic growth because economic growth is not itself sufficient for development.269 The reason why people have to be conscious with this approach to education is mainly what has been termed as the trickle-down theory, which suggests that

267 Hart, Aspirations, Education and Social Justice, 93-94.
once a country has achieved economic growth, the benefits will help in improving the lives of the poor. This has not proved to be true in many countries.270

The notions of human rights are another essential element of the enhanced HDCA. The kind of human rights in education ought to be those based on the humanness of the children and youth that are in education institutions. These are rights that are arrived at through a thorough public reasoning process. Rights that can be easily be accommodated in the education policy design and reforms without a lot of questioning.271 The human rights-based elements such as equity, non-discrimination, accountability, participation and transparency are built within the system to make sure that they deprived populations are also given equal opportunities in educational institutions.272

An education policy or reform is not going to serve all children in society unless it addresses the issues of capability obstacles that may be a result of the social arrangements within the educational institutions. Many education systems tend to look at the outcomes people get out of education without paying attention to the environmental context in children’s’ families, educational institutions and communities. The human rights that are formed through public reasoning require policy makers to design an education system that will look into issues of participation in development and equitable distribution of benefits to all children and youth, making sure that each and every child benefits by the education policy or reform designed.

270 Nussbaum, Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach, 47.
The unique characteristic of the enhanced HDCA framework is that it integrates all the four essential elements of aspirations, human capabilities, and notions of human capital and human rights in its approach to education. The assumption in this discussion is that the essential elements work together to guarantee all people in society equal opportunities to benefit from development education without discrimination.

A socially just education that would enhance people’s capabilities and enable them to achieve their aspirations is that which guarantees equal opportunities to all members of society. This necessitates that the social arrangements are organized in such a way that all children and youth will have their opportunities to benefit from their education systems. This would demand an approach to education that looks beyond enabling human beings to become more productive agents but also enabling them to improve their lives. People in societies, especially the vulnerable groups, look to an education that will guarantee them equal opportunities of education so that they are assured of their employability and social inclusion in the development process.  

There are four essential elements in the suggested EHDCA model that I explain using a venn diagram below in Figure 1, to show how they overlap within the education set up. The essential elements I identified are: 1) aspirations, 2) human capabilities, 3) human capital, 4) human rights. These essential elements of EHDCA model are put in a broader cultural context to draw attention to their interplay and the role they play in creating an education policy that has its focus on human development.

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It should be noted that depending on many other factors such as the availability of resources, cultural norms and beliefs, source of funding and geographical location; educational systems may emphasize a particular element that they find more appropriate. There are educational systems which will be more oriented to human capital, while others have more interest in human rights. Other educational systems may be more oriented to aspirations, while others look at human capabilities. Each country looks at what is more appropriate to it. The enhanced HDCA model is constituted as a holistic model that is focused on enhancing valued freedoms of peoples through education.

*Figure 1: The EHCDA Graphic*
Sen’s Conceptualization of the Practicality of Evaluating using HDCA

Sen instantiates the human development and capability concept as an approach for the evaluation of policy and whether it meets the goals and means of enhancing freedoms that persons seek. The conceptualization of the practicality of using HDCA in evaluation can be well understood by looking at what Sen calls the instrumental freedoms, although he equally endorses evaluation of those capabilities that constitute freedoms, such as well-being. These instrumental freedoms include political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparent guarantees and protective security. This is not the only list of instrumental freedoms that people need to become successful or to achieve their goals, but just the selected few that can serve the purpose of showing the important role freedoms play in facilitating the process of achieving one’s goals. Any people-oriented education would need to pay attention to whether all children and youth have the freedoms to achieve the educational benefits they want to achieve from the education provided to them.

The HDCA evaluative system, for instance, demands that people have the freedom to have access to economic facilities. This will enable them to use the economic resources for the purpose of consumption, production or exchanges of goods and services. Since the HDCA focuses on looking at the advantages people have to do and be what they value, the policy or reform has to consider the resources (in the capability approach, we can call them capability inputs) individuals have to use for conditions of exchange. In some societies, some people may not be achieving much from policies or

274 Sen, Development as Freedom, 38.
reforms because opportunities are not equally distributed and they are disadvantaged. With economic facilities, individuals can utilize economic resources to enhance their capabilities and achieve those things they are aspiring to.²⁷⁵ Within this context, it is important that we keep in mind the relation between national income and wealth of an individual country and economic entitlements of individuals. Individual countries may be enjoying the opportunities of utilizing economic resources while there is unequal distribution of economic resources among the individual citizens.²⁷⁶ This could work as a capability obstacle for children and youth in an education approach that does not pay attention to the necessity of equal opportunities in the education process.

The HDCA also considers the freedom of social opportunities. This is mainly in relation to the way a society has put in place arrangements for issues like education and health care, which arrangements have got a strong influence on the freedom of people to live better lives. It would be unrealistic to think that people would achieve their well-being or the freedom to live better lives if the social arrangements are not organized in such a way that all people will have equal opportunities to have access to those social opportunities. Situations such as illnesses and illiteracy can become obstacles for people to have the freedom to aspire to a better lifestyle. The same rationale applies to political freedoms because if people cannot read or write properly, then they are unable to read newspapers to know what is taking place in their society, and they cannot communicate to people by writing because of the lack of the skills to do it. It is these freedoms that can

²⁷⁵ Ibid..
empower individuals to be able to have the opportunities to benefit by any policy
designed in society. This means that young people need to have social opportunities
that will enable them to acquire the knowledge and skills that empower them to
participate in decisions that influence their lives. We have also to keep in mind the fact
that these instrumental freedoms complement each other.

In conceptualizing the practicality of evaluating education using the HDCA, it is
important to recognize the value of human freedom. Following Sen’s argument, we can
judge whether a society is successful or failing by evaluating the substantial freedoms
people in a particular society enjoy. In fact, the instrumental freedoms come as an
expansion of the role of freedom in human development. The instrumental freedoms
discussion focuses on people’s need for freedom to be able to live the way they would
like to live. The assumption here is that in the process of enacting more freedoms, they
are able to enhance further capabilities. The issue of individual freedom is very
important because many times people can be judged successful or as failures without
looking at the difficulties and challenges they go through to achieve what they have been
able to accomplish.

It is important to note that there is a strong relationship between individual
freedom and social development. Within this model, people’s success or achievement is
determined by looking at what advantages people have to be able to achieve their

277 Sen, Development as Freedom, 39.
278 Terry and Abdullat, op.cit. p. 69.
279 Sen, Development as Freedom, 18.
280 Ibid., 38.
281 Ibid.
success. This would mean that any country aiming at human and social development of its people and society, would need to look at areas such as the freedoms people have to succeed in their endeavors, the opportunities people have to education and health, and the different social powers within their societies that could also influence the achievement they want to attain.  

People may have capabilities and aspirations, but the institutional arrangements in which they operate could make it difficult for them to have the success they aspire to achieve. Some people for instance, who would like to achieve the education to enhance their capabilities may fail to exercise their freedom to participate in the choices and making the decisions that affect their lives. This may block them from having access to the opportunities in their societies. For instance, a hungry person may not be able to perform in his/her obligations because he/she is hungry. This is why any people-oriented policy or reform needs to pay attention to instrumental freedoms for both individual and the country’s development. There is a limit to economic growth in a country where people do not have well-educated people or where people are not healthy. This is why an education that focuses entirely on human capital without paying attention to other factors falls short of the importance of the health or education for workers in the development process.  

The following section will look into some elements from Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological theory that complements the enhanced HDCA, mainly his concepts of habitus, capital and field.

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283 Sen, Development as Freedom, ibid. pp. 4-5.
284 Ibid. pp. 5-6.
Bourdieu’s Concepts of Habitus, Capital and Field Complement the HDCA

Hart is one of the scholars that have related Pierre Bourdieu’s work with the human development capability approach. This was mainly in her work of theorizing the relationship between individual students and school, college and higher educational institutions. Bourdieu has three concepts that can complement the practical use of the HDCA and these are habitus, capital and field. By habitus, Bourdieu refers to the cultural and familial roots from which individuals grow. One’s habitus begins developing from the beginning of his/her life, and it develops in relation to the social milieu of his/her home, family, or community life; and through observation and listening to what is in his/her social environment. This habitus is usually reflected in one’s tastes, practices and works that combine to form and individuals’ particular lifestyle. It is from the habitus that young people acquire cultural capital. This implies that children and youth come to school from a particular habitus with the cultural capital acquired from their different social environments, which in Sen’s terms becomes the reason to value something.

The other concept in Bourdieu’s conceptualization that is crucial in this study is the one of capital. He talks of different forms of capital, and not only economic capital that tends to dominate the world of markets. His understanding of capital is of the body of commodities and resources that may be converted into what Sen calls capabilities, which means the freedom to pursue ways of being and doing that the individual has

reason to value.\textsuperscript{288} From this perspective, capital in Bourdieu would be equivalent to capabilities in Sen. The different forms of capital that he brings into discussion are social capital (this is accrued through social networks, families, and wider community networks), cultural capital (relevant to young people from different backgrounds regarding their perspectives of what they want to achieve in life), symbolic capital (this is manifested in individual prestige and authority) and economic capital (generated through inherited wealth, family income, and engagement in the economy for financial return). Individuals are influenced by all these four forms of capital.\textsuperscript{289} The way these different capitals are distributed among people creates groups that are more advantaged than others. This eventually creates inequalities in society. It is for that reason that in society there are people who are judged as being well-off, while others are not. Bourdieu emphasizes the fact that people may have any of these capitals, but individuals usually differ in the ability to convert them into other forms of capital.\textsuperscript{290} For Sen, these become sets and vectors of capabilities. This same reasoning can be applied in education; people make reasoned choices, set priorities and enact vectors of capabilities based on aspirations for freedoms whereby they will achieve their goals. It all depends upon their ability to convert what they have into valuable functionings.

The third important concept is the one of field, where Bourdieu is concerned with the domains people have in their social life. For instance, he looks at the formation of relations between individuals and institutions which are essentially mediated by different

\textsuperscript{288} Hart, \textit{Aspirations, Education and Social Justice}, 49.
\textsuperscript{290} Ibid, p. 243.
forms of capital, which in a way can create inequalities among individuals. Bourdieu’s concept of field complements the capability approach because it brings into the discussion the idea that although the individual remains the unit of evaluation, he/she is positioned within a wider sociocultural context, which influences their lifestyle, habitus, capitals/capabilities, aspirations and agency.

Chapter four presents the implications of the EHDCA model to secondary education TVET in Uganda. This will be done by responding to research question three, which is about how we can apply the EHDCA to secondary education TVET policy in Uganda.

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292 Hart, op.cit. p. 57.
CHAPTER 4

IMPLICATIONS OF AN ENHANCED HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY APPROACH FOR TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY IN UGANDA

As we look into the implications of EHDCA to TVET policy in Uganda, we have to keep in mind the fact that what we are doing in this chapter is to look at TVET in Uganda using the lens of the EHDCA model. However, this demands that the state of secondary education TVET at present be known, so that education policy makers and reformers get a good starting point for formulating education policies and reforms.

Uganda is located in East-Central Africa with an estimated population of 34,758,809 (July, 2013). School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education) in Uganda for both males and females is 11 years. Labor force was estimated to be 16.83 (2012) which means that more than half of the population does not do well defined jobs.293 There is a lot of debate across the globe concerning the future of technical, vocational and education and training (in this chapter, Technical, Vocational Education and Training; Vocational Technical Education; and Business, Technical Vocational Education and Training are synonymous). This discussion has become more prominent in the world today because of globalization, collapse of planned economies and failure of development policies in the fight against poverty. The field of Technical, Vocational Education and Training, commonly known as TVET is now being looked to by national

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and international policy makers as one of the education systems that could help in the fight against poverty in areas where poverty is still a major concern. Nations need to look at TVET not just as a separate kind of education but a system of education that needs to be integrated into the nation’s system of education and development planning.\(^\text{294}\) One of the main problems the Government of Uganda and all partners in education need to address today are the many challenges facing the country’s youth especially unemployment which is one of the highest in the Sub-Saharan Africa.\(^\text{295}\) There are many people that have gone to school and found little relevance of what they study within the school environment and what they experience in the world of work. This situation has led people to begin thinking of embracing technical vocational education and training as a way to bring a relevant education to many young people whose interests, talents and aspirations have been frustrated by the lack of relevant education to many young people.\(^\text{296}\)

The Ugandan government, through the Ministry of Education and Sports has made a decision to incorporate the “Educate!” curriculum from Barr Foundation into Uganda’s national A-level Entrepreneurship curriculum. This is one of the TVET programs to provide relevant knowledge and skills that are relevant to the young people in secondary schools. Educate! Uganda is a Nongovernment Organization that has created a model of education that can unlock the potential that many Ugandan young


\(^{296}\) Ibid.
people have to solve the many problems they encounter in their communities. The program does not only cater for the economic well-being of the young generation but also considers providing curriculum that puts emphasis on skills and experience students need to find solutions to alleviate problems such as poverty, violence, disease and environmental degradation. The mission of this organization is very much in line with the capability approach that looks into the well-being of the learners. This in a way shows how the government of Uganda has realized the importance of TVET and how it is making an effort with other partners in education to provide relevant education to young Ugandan citizens.\textsuperscript{297} However, we have to keep in mind the fact that there are still some Ugandan parents who are against their children taking practical subjects right from their early years of school. There is still a strong mentality that educated people do not engage in vocational work.\textsuperscript{298}

This section begins with an overview of the education system in Uganda, and later gives particular attention to the history of the current status of TVET in the country. It further looks into the challenges of TVET and how these challenges have not only affected people’s aspirations and productive capacities, but also hampered their human development. The section also pays special attention to more recent approaches and initiatives that other countries are using to improve TVET systems. The study finally looks at the implications of EHDCA model to TVET policy in Uganda.


\textsuperscript{298} Masiko Kahunga, “Refocusing our Technical and Vocational Training,” \textit{Daily Monitor Newspaper}, Uganda, Friday, March 7\textsuperscript{th} 2014.
An Overview of Education System in Uganda

It would be unfair to directly to explore secondary technical vocation education and training in Uganda without looking at Ugandan education system. Formal education in Uganda has gone through several modifications since the 1880s when it was introduced in the country by Christian Missionaries. However, this education has been characterized by a number of problems such as high dropout rates, gender disparities in enrolments, poor performances in schools, irrelevant curriculum and poor infrastructure. Many of these disparities are attributed to the historical and cultural factors that created differences not only in terms of gender, but also of religion, region and political orientation. Since its independence in October 1962, Uganda’s formal education has not fundamentally changed. The education in Uganda usually begins with early childhood education, which takes care of the children between the ages of 0-5. This level of education is mainly under the care of the private sector. When children complete their early childhood education they do their local exams to qualify them for the next level which is primary education. It takes seven years for primary school children (these are usually between the ages of 6-12) to complete their primary education. At the end of primary level (primary seven), children do a national exam called Primary Leaving Examination (P.L.E). The primary school completers have the option of either joining vocational school or secondary school. The results from the national examinations will help in determining who is to go where. Those who succeed and join secondary school take four years in what is called lower secondary (the students here are between the ages 299 International Youth Foundation, Uganda YouthMap, op.cit. p.3.
of 13-16). At the end of lower secondary, there is another national examination called Uganda National Examination Board, which also helps to determine who is to go where in the education ladder. After this stage, students again have options to join technical education for three (3) years or continue to advanced level (A-Level) for two (2) more years, primary teachers colleges for two (2) years, or even to low level health institutions. The students who join the advanced level (usually students aged 17-19) are the ones that continue to tertiary education, depending on how they perform at the national exam called Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education and the professions selected by the individual. Those different national examinations at different levels in Uganda function as an instrument to select successful students to the next higher levels, which usually have limited facilities for accommodating students beyond a given number. This means that the Ugandan education system pushes out many children at every transition level right from primary to university level because of failure to score the grades required for admission to the next level. With massification of education at primary level in 1997 and in secondary in 2008, many children have had an opportunity to enroll in primary and secondary school because education has become compulsory and free.\footnote{Education Policy Review Paper 2006. Also ADEA, Biennale on Education in Africa, in Beyond Primary Education: Challenges and approaches to expanding learning opportunities in Africa. Joseph Eilor, Enhancing equitable access to BTVET through coherent governance, public-private partnerships and multimedia campaigns development, (2008): 5.}
The History of TVET in Uganda

Historically, technical and vocational education and training in Uganda was started by the Missionaries in the early decade of the 20th century. They first of all started a trade school at Kisubi, which is 15 miles from Kampala. The present Makerere University itself started as a government technical college in 1921 on the same hill that Makerere University is today. It is later in 1922 that it was renamed Makerere College and it offered courses in medical subjects, agriculture, veterinary science, elementary engineering and surveying, and teacher training. In 1928, trade and artisan courses were transferred from Makerere to other places to open space for higher levels of technical education. Technical education got another twist after the Second World War when rehabilitation centers for returning soldiers were set up in different parts of the country to help the returning soldiers from the Second World War acquire basic training in various crafts. The main aim of skilling the returning soldiers was not so much for giving them skills that would enable them to improve their lives, but it was to avoid problems that would arise from having unemployed and redundant ex-soldiers. These small centers that were originally meant to serve ex-army men were later developed into technical schools to cater for pupils for four year courses. The centers served well for training ex-soldiers but many failed to function when they were turned into technical schools to provide higher more knowledge and skills to students who wanted to advance. They could no longer provide the basic skills and knowledge that they were giving to the ex-soldiers. The other problem that befell these centers was that many of them were located in rural areas where they could no longer be in touch with the industries for which they were
purported to serve. This was the beginning of the failure of technical education in Uganda. There was no longer a liaison between the schools and industries, and each one showed little or no interest in the other’s work.\(^{301}\)

The problems that were addressed on the state of Technical Education in Uganda in the UNESCO Report of 1967 are still the problems that the country is still grappling with in the 21\(^{st}\) century. The first concern was about what the manpower needs were in Uganda, the number of people needed in different sectors of the economy, whether it was necessary to overproduce workforce, and finally, whether the ministry of Planning, Finance and Labor were working together. This became a concern because from the findings of the report, these ministries were giving contradicting information concerning technical and vocational education and training in Uganda.\(^{302}\) This history of the field of technical education in Uganda gives us a foundation of the state of technical, vocational education and training in Uganda today.

**The Status of TVET in Uganda**

There are many centers of technical and vocational education and training across the country, and in fact, some of the learning and acquisition of skills takes place at work or in homes of those with skills. Within such contexts, many young people have had an opportunity to acquire knowledge and learn skills in areas such as brick-laying, carpentry, motor vehicle repairing and operating informal businesses in local communities. Private institutions have also played a very big role in contributing to the training of many young

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\(^{302}\) Ibid. p. 8.
people in vocational and technical skills in Uganda. Like all the other countries that have invested in TVET, Uganda offers various TVET programs health, agriculture, technical and para-professional fields and business. This addition of business to TVET has resulted in the government of Uganda to call TVET business, technical, vocational education and training (BTVET). Both the government and the private sector participate fully in enhancing knowledge and skills in the development of the Ugandan people and the Ugandan economy.\textsuperscript{303}

The challenge that the Ugandan government and the citizens have always faced is that BTVET as a system of education is not well defined. There are many people and organizations that deliver BTVET services making it difficult to establishing policies under which all BTVET services providers can be monitored to ensure that they are delivering better services. Literature reveals that for the last few decades, BTVET has not performed to people’s expectations, and this is because it has not been a priority sector in which the government is willing to invest. There has been less facilitation from government to BTVET, and so little has been done to improve on its operations and expansion.\textsuperscript{304}

\textsuperscript{303} Anders Wirak, Betsy Heen, Eli Moen, & Santa Vusia, “Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) for Employment and Private Sector Development in Uganda,” Report 2003-1: 22. In Uganda, TVET encompasses Business, Education and Training, that is why B is added to the abbreviation of TVET. It is from early 2000s that the abbreviation changed from TVET to BTVET. 

\textsuperscript{304} Joseph Eilor, “Enhancing equitable access to BTBET through coherent governance, public-private partnerships and multimedia campaigns development.” In the Conference on “Beyond primary education: Challenges and approaches to expanding learning opportunities. Biennale on Education in Africa (Maputo, Mozambique, May, 5-9 2008): 7.
For any student to be admitted into these BTVET institutions, one must have completed primary or secondary schooling. These institutions provide education and training examinable by UNEB (Uganda National Examination Board) or UBTEB (Uganda Business and Technical Examination Board). These exams lead to awards including certificate, diploma, and higher diploma. The good part of the structure in BTVET is that it takes care of the training of both primary and secondary school leavers.

The purpose of Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training is clear in several government documents and that is to enable students with intellectual and technical growth so that they can become productive members of the communities in which they live. It is also to help produce craftsmen and women, technicians and other people with different skills so as to meet the demands of the labor market in such areas as industry, agriculture, commerce and other areas that are taught in technical, vocational education and training in Uganda.

The idea behind BTVET is to push technical and vocational education beyond what Ronald Dore calls qualificationism (qualification-oriented education system) to an education that will produce outcomes by creating education alternatives for all Ugandans to achieve the knowledge and skills they need to contribute to Uganda’s economic development. The outcomes are seen in terms of employable skills and the competences

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306 ADEA, Biennale on Education in Africa, op.cit. p. 5.
that are relevant in the labor market. The government of Uganda demystifies the idea that
the BTVET system is only meant for primary and secondary school drop outs. The
government puts emphasis on the fact that all Ugandans, at whatever level of education
need skills, and so need to benefit from the BTVET system of education, not just let it to
primary and secondary school leavers. Further, the Government of Uganda expects
that when one has passed through the BTVET institutions one should be able to acquire
applied knowledge and skills and also create a positive attitude towards work, other
limiting oneself to while collar jobs in the formal sector. The challenge is that to bring
vocational education institutions to the level where all students benefit by the system,
there is need for both human and financial resources which are not enough in low-income
countries like Uganda.

In trying to concentrate on the human and financial resources, there is a danger of
falling into what has been called ‘productionism,’’ which only looks at human beings in
terms of resources that can be educated or trained so as to contribute to economic
productivity to business or nations. It is within this context that countries such as Uganda
need to be careful so that students of BTVET are respected as human beings and not mere
instruments for production processes. As students in Uganda endeavor to acquire
knowledge and skills in their field, they should not be reduced to mere objects to provide
labor. For BTVET to promote development in Uganda the students should be seen as
human beings and not mere resources for economic exploitation as perceived in the

\[308\] BTVET, Uganda Website.
\[309\] Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Enhancing Equitable Access
to BTVET Though Coherent Governance, Public-Private Partnerships & Multimedia Campaigns
human capital approach to education.\textsuperscript{310} In discussing the issues of BTVET, it is important to recognize the fact that it is at times difficult to define BTVET because of the failure to separate the boundaries between BTVET and general education. The complexity of this division is in the sense that business technical vocational education itself has got content from general education and vice versa.\textsuperscript{311} This is why countries such as Uganda need to look into BTVET and general education to see what will help to enhance people’s life.

BTVET is an extensive educational enterprise that stretches from secondary to post-secondary levels. This type of education encompasses many programs which are designed to prepare students for specific trades, crafts, technician or some other professional position in business, technical and vocational programs. This is done at different levels starting with the most elementary level to the most advanced level of education and training in business technical vocational programs. There are several courses in business technical vocational education and training labor market programs and these include: agriculture, family and consumer sciences (traditionally called home economics), engineering, carpentry, food and nutrition, computer programing, fashion and design, accountancy, nursing, medicine, architecture, and communication. These courses are meant to prepare students so that they can secure employment and make a living. This is an important education for students because it creates wider careers options


and avenues through which they can further their educational opportunities. The capacity for BTVET institutions in Uganda to create more options and opportunities demands that all stakeholders in education be aware of the different business technical and vocational education programs that can fit in the Ugandan context. It is this kind of approach to BTVET that can address the capabilities and aspirations of every individual student. It should however, be noted that a country such as Uganda cannot create many opportunities for BTVET when people are not exposed to a diversity of programs. This would demand that all partners in BTVET be aware of programs such as agricultural education, business education, family and consumer, health occupation, marketing education, technical education, technology education and trade and industrial education programs. All these vocational-technical education programs require competent teachers in their occupational field and in pedagogy.

From the international perspective, TVET is comprised of several elements such as Apprenticeship training, Vocational Education, Technical Education, Technical Vocational Education (TVE), Occupational Education (OC), Professional and Vocational Education (PVE), Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Workforce Education (WE). These terms are used differently in other parts of the world but all referring to

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elements that are within Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET). In case of Uganda there is BTVET, which is TVET but with an added element of business.

The Status of Secondary School-based BTVET in Uganda

TVET at any level has always been perceived as an assured way to solve the problem of the joblessness of the youth in many countries across the globe. There are certainly three distinct systems of technical and vocational education and training worldwide and these are: the school-based education, dual system (dual apprenticeship system) that combines school-based and firm-based training, and finally informal training.\(^{315}\) All these different education and training systems are effective ways of training workforce. Education in secondary schools of many developed countries is characterized by the duality between general education and vocational education. The rationale for general education in developed countries is to provide students with academic-oriented knowledge so that they can have a strong base for higher education or training. On the other hand, TVET helps students to acquire practice-oriented knowledge to be able to have skills that are required in specific occupations during their lifetime. The uniqueness of school-based TVET is that it follows a formal curriculum that combines general education and vocational/occupational knowledge. However the schools in school-based vocational education can also differ depending on the level at which each school focuses on either academic or vocational at either lower or upper secondary.\(^{316}\)

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\(^{316}\) Ibid. pp. 1-2.
Since my interest in this inquiry is secondary school-based TVET, it is worthwhile seeing what school-based vocational and technical education has been of major concern in the other parts of the world. This is a major concern because with a good quality TVET education, the young generations could have more opportunities to achieve their dreams.

Quisumbing brings to our attention the fact that TVET is a master key to transformation in the world of work and economy, in alleviating poverty, in saving the environment and in improving people’s quality of life. It is because of its role as master key that TVET’s philosophy, vision and mission goals and objectives, policies and practices, content and methodologies are undergoing transformation.317

The reason why BTVET has been a major concern in secondary schools in Uganda is the perception that it enables students to obtain entry to the higher status professions. Some students have been using BTVET as a mere stepping stone to other professions they think are valuable to them. However, with time secondary schools have modified their curriculum and entrance procedures to become more comprehensive by providing a more diverse range of courses in order to accommodate the more diverse study interests and range of capabilities of students. Secondary schools are now increasingly becoming more academic and vocational in nature. This kind of approach to education promotes the human capital approach to education where the focus is on economic productivity. This implies that secondary vocational education and training is more oriented to knowledge and skills that can help the young people in secondary

schools to secure employment. Education from this perspective is oriented to meeting labor force requirements.\textsuperscript{318}

Secondary schools in the medieval and Renaissance Europe were mainly focused on educating the elite men and women in the liberal arts. What we see today as a dislike of vocational technical education and training in secondary school has a long history. It is only during the time of industrialization that much emphasis was put on science and technology, and as a result technical schools, which were less prestigious, emerged in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Europe. It is at this time that the secondary education system begins to be less elitist and having a curriculum that was more diverse.\textsuperscript{319}

However, the tendency in many countries, including Uganda has been to put vocational education at a lower status than academic education, and parents, guardians and many students in many countries prefer academic education to vocational education. Surprisingly enough, vocational education is growing rapidly not only in poor countries but also in the developed world. This becomes a paradox in a sense that there is a stigma attached to vocational education and yet the field is gaining more popularity in many countries.\textsuperscript{320}

The case in Uganda is that with the introduction of Universal Primary Education in 1997, the Ministry of Education and Sports has continued to endeavor to see how it can meet its objectives. The very high enrolment rate in primary schools stimulated an

\textsuperscript{318} Rupert Maclean and Margarita, Vocationalization of Secondary and Higher Education: Pathways to the World of Work, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{319} Ibid., 43-44.

increasing demand for preparation for a post primary route for graduates to follow. It was because of this high enrolment in primary schools that forced the Government of Uganda to consider post primary education and training especially in the years 1998 – 2004. It is later that the issue of inclusiveness of TVET also became a concern for the government of Uganda and had to be addressed in the second Education Sector Development Plan, which was given the name the Education Sector Development Plan (ESSP) 2004-2015.\textsuperscript{321}

There are many students not just in Uganda but in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa who are frustrated because they neither get adequately prepared for continuing with higher education nor are they well equipped to join the world of work. This makes them question the viability of the education systems. It is that frustration of many young people that has pushed the government and education policy makers to approach education in Uganda from a different perspective. Further, Uganda as a country needs to be realistic especially in its focus on secondary students to go to higher levels of education. The challenge to this push for higher education is that there are many students that do not go beyond secondary school. The danger of focusing on students who will go to higher institutions of learning is that the students without the capability to proceed with education to higher levels will be left out and may have fewer opportunities when they go out of school, hence the need for the vocationalization of secondary schools.\textsuperscript{322}


In addition, BTVET in Uganda has for a long time faced the problem of low levels of funding and investment from the government. In many ways, this has affected the development of the BTVET system in Uganda. The reason why low funding from government affects BTVET in Uganda is that it is very expensive to have a full infrastructure of technical and vocational related courses. This is mainly in terms of laboratories, libraries, lecture rooms, sports facilities, hostels, staff houses, electricity and water. The logistic requirements of establishing a BTVET in a secondary school demand a lot of human and financial resources. This could explain why most BTVET institutions in Uganda have poor infrastructure in addition to poor management of the little infrastructure that is in place. It is difficult to expect such schools to do well and produce an appropriate labor force when they do not have an appropriate infrastructure.

The other problem with the infrastructure in secondary BTVET is that it is at times not gender friendly and many facilities do not accommodate students with disabilities. This is why most of these institutions are not attractive to many students. Further, there is always equipment and tools to buy for the business technical vocational courses in secondary schools and all this costs money. Yet the government has little money that it allocates to the Ministry of Education and Sports for such necessities for BTVET in Ugandan secondary schools. Not forgetting that the government itself has at times other priorities that are more urgent than education. These are issues that have to be put into
consideration before bringing students into an environment where they are not going to gain much to achieve their potential and develop what they are capable of doing.\textsuperscript{323}

The other important challenge that has affected BTVET institutions in Uganda is the fact that they are underfunded, understaffed and are generally poorly equipped.\textsuperscript{324} Such handicaps do not allow BTVET institutions to improve the quality of knowledge and skills they pass on to students because these demand institutions to have adequate resources-material, human and financial. It is because of the lack of resources that the TVET institutions have at times not performed according to people’s expectations, and hence have created a bad image of TVET in the general public in Uganda. Much of the funds to BTVET institutions are from public budget and what households pay for students’ tuition. The public budget only allocates four of the Ministry of Education and Sports budget to BTVET education, which is not enough for the demands of BTVET in Uganda.\textsuperscript{325}

Although there are many unemployed young people from both academic and vocational institutions, The SABER Workforce Development Barometer Report shows that there is still shortage of appropriate skilled labor in Ugandan key growth sectors. The shortages are mainly identified in areas such as hospitality, information and communication technology, business management, financial services, mining and environmental technology. This shortage of skills in key growth sectors of the country


\textsuperscript{324} Ministry of Education and Sports, 2011.

\textsuperscript{325} Ibid.
indicates that there is still a wide gap between BTVET and the needs of society. This is why I think that it is first of all important to know people’s aspirations and the aspirations of the Ugandan government. Second, see how people and government can work together and agree on the aspirations that need to be achieved, and finally provide an education that will enhance people’s capabilities to achieve the desired aspiration both at individual and national level.

The issue of high demand for skills in Uganda is not new. This need had already been echoed by the World Bank 2006 Enterprise Survey, which found out that ten percent of manufacturing firms considered skilled labor a major constraint to business success and labor productivity in Uganda. Skills shortage is an area that the Ugandan Government and the private sector have to address if they are to remain competitive in labor market both at home, in the region and around the globe. Uganda is facing many challenges in its education system that makes it difficult for its population to develop skills that are needed in the labor market. Uganda cannot develop a competitive workforce unless it addresses the obstacles that make it difficult for these young children not to complete their basic education. Uganda, as a country cannot take advantage of its youth’s dividend without providing an education that will develop the knowledge and skills of its workforce. The other challenge that the BTVET system in Uganda faces is that it does not open up a wider range of occupations to accommodate people with different interests, nor does it adequately address the issue of the skills that many people need in the emerging economic sectors. The Government of Uganda and policy makers in

326 World Bank, SABER-Workforce Development, op.cit. p. 6
BTVET need to come up with better ways of approaching BTVET system so that they are able to equip BTVET students with practical skills, knowledge and competencies that they need to be job-relevant. Uganda’s BTVET is also failing to provide soft skills that have become absolutely necessary to perform productively in modern work environments. Today, there is much emphasis on soft skills such as communication, customer care, problem solving, work attitudes and the ethics. These skills are still underdeveloped and underemphasized in the Ugandan workforce development (WfD) programs.

In Uganda, young people, some academics and some government leaders have always looked at technical vocational education training as an education for those who are not intelligent enough to aspire for office work. The aim of education, in that case is to help individuals acquire white collar jobs. For parents, guardians, many policy makers, governments and students education is meant to lead people to white collar jobs not to dirty jobs as people usually perceive technical vocational education. This idea is reinforced by David N. Wilson who looks at the problem from a historical perspective, in a sense that during the colonial era, vocational education the European colonial powers introduced dual educational and training heritages to their sub-Saharan Africa colonies, whereby vocational education courses were put in the category of a second class education for the children of the colonized and an academic education for the children of

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327 Ibid. pp. 6-7.
328 Ibid. pp.6-7.
the colonizers. Vocational education was perceived as negative and inferior to academic education. It is for that reason that at the time of independence, black Africans rushed to throw off that type of education that was meant to sustain the black African in his/her state of inferiority position by the colonizers. For instance, when students did wrong in class they were punished using vocational and agricultural labor, and those who succeeded in academic education were rewarded by white collar jobs. The knowledge of this academic differentiation between vocational education and academic education can give us a good starting point of analyzing the challenges of TVET and how they can be overcome. 331

Further, BTVET in Uganda faces the challenge of the speed of change that has proved difficult for the government, policy makers and implementers to be able prepare their students for unpredictable labor markets. Forward planning coupled with inadequate data bases have also been a major challenge for planners to make an accurate forecasting not only of the skills needed but also of the knowledge needed at a given time in the TVET system. The Ugandan TVET has also been slow in embracing the reskilling programs, which have become a common practice in the world of rampant technological changes. This would enable Ugandan students to adjust to the changing situations as they come. Research has also revealed that the Government of Uganda has done little consultation in starting some of the BTVET programs, and it is not surprising that many

of these programs have not been successful. It is within the context of these challenges and many others that I suggest the evaluation of Secondary education TVET in Uganda using the Enhanced Human Development Capability Approach to be able to see where it is doing well and where it needs to make improvements. The evaluation is from the EHDCA perspective. The study is limited to secondary education TVET in Uganda.

The issue of data generation, utilization and dissemination has also been of a major concern of the development of BTVET in Uganda. By the fact that BTVET system is underfunded, the form and quality of the data they have, the method of how it is generated, the frequency of data gathering, its storage and analysis have a lot to desire. Within this kind of situation there comes a challenge of proper planning and policy analysis in the BTVET institutions. Although Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) has been mandated with the responsibility of generating and disseminating information to all departments in the country including BTVET, their data does not cover fully the information that BTVET providers would need to improve their system of education. The other problem it that at times UBOS is so slow to generate and disseminate the information so that by the time the information reaches to those in need of it, it is either outdated or is no longer needed by BTVET providers. There also used to be Labor offices at every district in Uganda, which used to be responsible for the collection and application of labor and employment data. There are, today a few labor offices at the district level that are still operational. This could explain the reason why BTVET in

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Uganda has continued to fail in tracking the labor market dynamics and skills demands.\textsuperscript{333}

BTVET in Uganda will still not develop to its full capacity without a national policy that fosters research and innovation in the BTVET system of education. It is through research that the Government of Uganda can be able to direct and improve its BTVET programs for improving economic growth and development. The Government of Uganda needs to engage researchers in BTVET at individual, institutional, community and national level so that all partners in the BTVET system can benefit by knowing the social and economic benefits, philosophy, ideology, institutional modalities, curricula and many other issues that people in the BTVET system need to know. People are likely to value BTVET system if they are well informed about it and the opportunities it provides to people who follow it.\textsuperscript{334}

BTVET system in Uganda has also continued to face a challenge at the policy planning level and administration in that the present Education Planning and Policy Analysis (EPPA) Department in the Ministry of Education is the leading body in the process, including handling issues of BTVET. This department is mainly comprised of economists and/ or educational planners and policy analysts, who tend to judge all decisions on BTVET in financial terms. This causes friction between the BTVET Department as it is the one that generates planning and policy matters and the Education Planning and Policy Analysis (EPPA) that is usually influential in the decisions taken at

\textsuperscript{333} Ibid., 20.  
\textsuperscript{334} Ibid., 20.
the end of the engagement in the discussion. The planning at this level has to some extent been perceived as weak because of the conflict of interest between the two departments. The BTVET Department is concerned with improving the standards of BTVET, while the EPPA is concerned with minimizing the costs.\footnote{Okinyal, ibid. 21.} One of the biggest challenges that BTVET (TVET) system in Uganda faces today is that the government does not have a task force that is set apart to foresee matters of BTVET in the country. For instance, the government of Uganda lacks a reform secretariat of BTVET, and it leaves all the work under the control of the Ministry of Education and Sports, who may at times not have the expertise to do the job.\footnote{Council for African Policy, op.cit. pp. 6-7.}

Curriculum design has also been a challenge in secondary BTVET. The curriculum in many of these schools is often flawed, having too little or too much overlap, and there are inequalities in the way secondary schools are vocationalized because many schools do not have adequate teachers and resources. The ways some of these BTVET courses are taught in secondary schools do not inspire students to use the knowledge and skills acquired to solve problems in the world of work. The experience from many of these secondary BTVET institutions is that it is difficult to determine what students have learnt from these institutions. There are also people who think that it is difficult for one to achieve useful knowledge in private life by studying BTVET from secondary schools.\footnote{Jon Lauglo, “Vocationalized Secondary Education Revisited,” in Vocationalization of Secondary Education Revisited, Jon Lauglo and Rupert Maclean (eds.), \textit{Technical and Vocational Education and Training Series} (Netherlands: Springer, 2005), 8-9.}
According to the facts from the Education Taskforce Report, the BTVET system in Uganda in its present state does not produce the appropriate skilled workforce that Uganda as a country needs to increase incomes and employment to compete in the East African and international markets. According to The Education Taskforce Report, less than 40% of the large and medium courses offered by BTVET institutions are relevant. This means that there are many BTVET institutions which train young people that after graduations they cannot meet the labor market demands because of inadequate resources. Furthermore, there is still insufficiency in training in some of the programs such as agriculture and other programs in the informal sector. The way students are enrolled in these programs, the curriculum content, and training methodologies still has a lot to desire. Agriculture and the informal sector which are the most important subsectors in Uganda’s labor market have not been given much attention in the BTVET system. This has not only hampered development but also maintained the high unemployment levels among the youth in Uganda.\footnote{Council of African Policy, ibid. p.7.} Part of the irrelevancy of TVET curriculum in Uganda has been attributed to lack of data which brings in a mismatch between TVET and the available economic opportunities. There is also a problem whereby some of the data that is collected is unreliable or at times manipulated, causing a mismatch between TVET and the economic opportunities in Uganda.\footnote{Bilal Barakat, Lyle Kane and Alex Inglis, “From Assessment to Planning: Hope for TVET in Uganda,” in R.Maclean and D.Wilson (eds.), \textit{International Handbook of Education for the Changing World of Work} (2009), 775. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4020-5281-1\_V.2}
Challenges to successfully achieve a good secondary BTVET in Uganda will still be there but according to Lauglo, they can be minimized by careful putting in consideration the following conditions: implementing the BTVET system that has been well-thought out by BTVET providers, ensuring that the BTVET programs are aimed at solving specific problems, continuous assessment to check whether the system is working effectively and efficiently, avoiding gender bias within the secondary school BTVET programs, having a better understanding of cost implications, taking some time to evaluate the learning outcomes and the impact, and attending to process skills such as creativity and collaborative work. Vocationalization is a good policy but any individual, private organization, community or government that is dreaming to establish a BTVET system that will address the needs of all students must be assured of enough resources especially human and financial resources. This is partly the reason why it has become difficult for poor countries like Uganda to establish good secondary BTVET. It is a venture that demands a lot of both human and financial resources if it is to serve as a successful BTVET education system. The next section is to evaluate BTVET in secondary education in Uganda using the Enhanced Human Development Capability Approach model.

Evaluating the Pre and Post BTVET Policy in Secondary Schools in Uganda

The issue of evaluating the pre and post BTVET policy in Uganda today is very crucial because it provides information to policy makers, so that they can engage in

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designing education policy or reforms knowing what works and what does not work.\textsuperscript{341}

The evaluation of BTVET in Uganda will be done using the EHDCA lens. Once BTVET policy makers are aware of the outcomes of the evaluation, then they can think of the ways in which they can integrate the essential elements of the EHDCA in addressing the needs, concerns and interests of BTVET students.

First of all, Ugandan Government did not have any substantive policy for technical and vocational skills development until 2003 when a policy was formulated and adapted by the Ministry of Education and Sports. This policy provides the framework for technical skills development at post-primary school level aimed at preparing students for direct entry into the labor market as well as entry into higher-level technical and tertiary education. This obviously has challenges such as changes in curricula, adequately trained staff, as well as specialized institutions that can effectively respond to labor-market demand. The Ministry of Education and Sports was given the mandate to follow up in formulating the BTVET Act, after which the ministry would forward it to the Uganda Parliament for consideration and approval in 2008. The Act addresses several issues in BTVET such as establishing the institutional framework for the promotion and coordination of BTVET in Uganda. This would mean bringing all stakeholders in BTVET training, governance, and management of BTVET institutions, and also establishing the mechanisms and organs for the regulation of qualifications (standards, assessment and certification) and training delivery in formal and non-formal institutions.

The concern in BTVET in Uganda has been to come up with a framework that can help to balance academic and vocational education at post-primary levels. This is why the secondary school curriculum is being reviewed to make it more responsive to national labor demands, and 56 secondary schools are being transformed into vocational schools. This development is not only meant for the young people still in secondary schools but also providing short modularized courses to make it possible for dropouts or adults to acquire skills. The culture of these 56 schools is to balance academic and vocational education so that education institutions are able to meet labor-market demands.342

Some people now realize that policy makers, reformers and all partners in BTVET need to be brought on board to see how to synchronize BTVET services among all BTVET service providers in Uganda. The policy also looks into the issues of quality assurance, process of admission of students and trainees to BTVET institutions, and effective education. For more than a decade, the Ugandan government has in several ways been engaged in seeing ways through which the BTVET system could be improved to ensure that all citizens have access to opportunities that can enable them to contribute to national growth and development. The effort to improve BTVET continues to develop especially with the formulation of the BTVET Strategic Plan 2011-2020, which is aimed at introducing many reforms within the system that has been going on for the last decade.343

All children and youth in Ugandan secondary education TVET have valued functionings but many of them fail to achieve them because of irrelevant curriculum, cultural norms, economic constraints, inability of government to secure them the kind of opportunities they need, and other constraints that block them from achieving the lifestyles they have reason to value. Secondary education TVET schools exist in Uganda and they have help many to acquire the knowledge and skills they need in the Ugandan society. However, there is still lack of real options, freedoms and choices for many individual students in TVET institutions for them to enhance their human development. From the enhanced human development capability approach perspective, secondary education TVET system in Uganda has to consider the extent to which all their students have freedoms and agency to enhance their capabilities and achieve their aspirations. This would demand that secondary education TVET widens each student’s capability set by exposing them to as many options as possible so that they can have a significant range of options from which to choose the best from their capability set.

Using the EHDCA lens demands that the content of what secondary students learn at school, what they value during their time at school and the process through which their learn the content material be directed to contributing substantially to their improved lives.

345 Ibid. p. 477.
This is not only in terms of the future improved lives they aspire to achieve but also improved lives when they are still at school.  

The enhanced human development capability approach demands that all individuals in secondary education TVET be given access to the same set of ‘beings’ and ‘doings’ so that they can have their opportunities to make choices to the kind of lives they want to live. This means that secondary education TVET institutions to provide as many options to students as possible so that each student can make a choice from the many options exposed to him or her. This is not to undermine the role that the government of Uganda has played in giving some TVET students opportunities, but there still many students that have been left out on choosing the kind of life they want if they were given equal opportunities.

In addition, there are students in secondary education TVET who are lack to get the kind of training they wanted to have. This could have helped them to enhance their capabilities and accomplish their dreams. On the other hand, there are those students who have not been given the opportunity to choose the kind of training they would have reason to value and the achievements they had anticipated out of that training. Using the EHDCA’s would require that secondary education TVET institutions address the kind of skill-development opportunities they want to make available to their students, and also find out the range of choices their students have relative to the type of training they will

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follow. The opportunity issue is an essential element in an empowering education system that TVET institutions and their governments do not need to neglect.  

The other important issue to address is the voice which students, their parents and all other stakeholders have concerning the knowledge, skills and the professional development they would like students to have. This would also address the resources they have to implement their concerns and whether the learning processes are all directed to achieving the desired outcomes. There is also the issue of whether the individual has the capability to convert what he/she studies in a secondary education TVET into his or her valuable outcomes. The EHDCA demands that the whole process be looked into so that the obstacles are minimized for the individual to enjoy the freedoms that will enable him/her to live a life he/she values.

The other issue to consider is the motivations for which students in secondary education are embracing education in the TVET institutions. Students in those institutions have what motivates them to go for that type of education and training. It is from this perspective that the concept of aspiration becomes very important. The young secondary school students look to the future they want to achieve. However, they have to make sure that they have the resources necessary to achieve the future they aspire to. It is, in that case worthless for an individual to aspire to the future when he/she does not have the resources necessary to achieve that future spired to. This implies that students in secondary education institutions ought to be realistic with their aspirations. Students need

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349 Ibid.
to aspire to what they think is feasible and practical. If not, they can end up being frustrated by the failure to achieve their unrealistic aspirations.\textsuperscript{350}

The EHDCA also looks into the conversion factors which enable secondary education TVET students to be able to convert the means available into freedoms. This means that TVET institutions have to think of the personal (for instance, disabilities and intelligence), social (e.g. power relations, discriminating practices, gender roles, social norms and public policies), and environmental (e.g. geographical location and climate) conversion factors that may force them to enhance certain capabilities and aim at achieving other aspirations in their aspiration set or choose otherwise.\textsuperscript{351} This is why it is not always the case that what people achieve to do or be is something they have always aspired to achieve. Certain barriers can always force you to go for an alternative that you never aspired to in life.\textsuperscript{352} It is good to dream but people should be aware of the reality that there are barriers or constraints that people meet which force them to make decisions that are not necessarily based on their aspirations and capabilities.

With the EHDCA countries such as Uganda are called upon to make a shift from the dominant productivist conceptions that focus on economic development, to human development. The EHDCA would require secondary school TVET institutions and the government of Uganda to place the well-being of students at the center, shifting the lens from income generation and with it employability to a lens on capability expansion which includes but is not limited to the capability to work. Aspirations are also a capability that

\begin{footnotes}
\item[350] Ibid. pp. 168-169.
\item[352] Morrison Gutman and Akerman, “Determinants of Aspirations,” i.
\end{footnotes}
can also be enhanced within individual students.\footnote{Lesley Powell, “Reimagining the Purpose of VET-Expanding the Capacity to Aspire in South African further Education and Training Students,” \textit{International Journal of Educational Development} 32, (2012): 643.} There has been an argument by scholars that TVET needs to go beyond the productivist frameworks that focus on the development of human capital for economic development and employability as a solution to the problem of unemployment in nations to human development.\footnote{Simon McGrath, “Where to now for Vocational Education and Training in Africa? \textit{International Journal of Training Research} 9, (2011), 42-44.} From the EHDCA perspective, countries such as Uganda need to make that paradigm shift from looking at TVET from only the economic production but also to look at the way in which TVET can improve the well-being of people.

There are people in TVET circles who already see TVET not only as contributing to the preparation of the workforce, but also as a tool to enhance human development by creating capabilities and helping individuals in institutions to put them to use so as to enhance human development and sustainable growth.\footnote{Simon McGrath, “Where to now for Vocational Education and Training in Africa? \textit{International Journal of Training Research} (2011), 42.} From EHDCA perspective, the purpose of investing in people is to first of all to improve their quality of life. The second purpose of generating more income and producing more quality products become the means for which people can require the resources to improve their human well-being. Knowledge and skills are important if they can help people to improve their quality of life. When the TVET students graduate and get jobs that enable them to get income, that income should benefit individuals by improving their well-being. The EHDCA demands that Uganda to engages students in TVET institutions, find out their aspirations, then find
out the capabilities their students have so that they can be enhanced to achieve their aspirations. The following section will be on the summary of the EHDCA, conclusion and the implications of EHDCA for secondary education BTVET in Uganda

Summary of the EHDCA, Conclusion and Implications of EHDCA for Secondary Education BTVET Policy in Uganda

The summary of the EHDCA, conclusion and implications of the EHDCA for secondary education BTVET policy can be better understood by looking again on the research questions of this inquiry. It is how these research questions have been answered that will help up to make the conclusion of this inquiry and see the implications of the EHDCA model to BTVET policy in Uganda.

Summary of the EHDCA

The first question was asking about the relationship of the dominant development models and the capability approach. The findings from this study reveal that the study of the dominant approaches to education is not only important for sensitizing people on the responsibility they have to always have the purposes for which they want education, but also suggests a framework for formulating education policy and reforms. In response to question one, it was argued that the elements of the two dominant approaches to education (human capital and human rights-based) are reflected within the human development capability approach. The acquisition of knowledge and skills, access and quality to education are all elements of the human develop capability approach. But none

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of the other approaches to education has human well-being as the main purpose of education. The uniqueness of this study is in the sense that it does not only end at making the distinctiveness of the development models, as does Sen, Walker and Unterhalter. This study brings into the discussion the new idea of the necessity of understanding human capital and human rights concepts as constituting parts of HDCA.

Further, the EHDCA model to education can be understood by responding to research question two. This research question was about how the understanding of aspirations and human capabilities inclusive of notions of human capital and human rights help us to conceptualize education. None of the concepts (aspirations, human capabilities, human capital and human rights) can work independently without the others. From the EHDCA’s perspective, it is the responsibility of those formulating education policy designs or reforms to design a system that can develop people’s capabilities so that they can achieve certain ends. This necessitates taking into account people’s aspirations so that they can enhance the capabilities to achieve those aspirations. Further, human capabilities and aspirations are themselves not enough if there are no notions of human capital (e.g. knowledge, skills, and efficiency) and human rights (e.g. dignity, respect, participation, accountability and empowerment) within the education policy formation and practice.

The interrelatedness of aspirations and human capabilities inclusive of notions of human capital and human rights are essential elements and need always to be reflected in education policy/reform and practice. It is this approach to education that will enable people to achieve valued freedoms. Attending to people’s aspirations and capabilities
opens up more options/alternatives and opportunities for people. It is through this model of education (EHDCA model) that people are more likely to discover what is in their aspiration and capability sets. This discovery can enable them to know the capabilities to develop to achieve their valued aspirations. However, there is need for professionals that can help young people to go through the process of identifying their capabilities and realistic aspirations.

**Conclusion**

Developing countries such as Uganda need to stop and consider the purpose for which they want education. This is an issue with which Mwalimu Julius Nyerere addresses in the 1960s, but it has not been resolved up to today. There has always been a tendency of thinking about education in terms of producing professionals. The focus has always been to train individuals and groups for the skills required to earn higher salaries in the modern sector of developing countries’ economies. Education in Uganda cannot serve the needs of all people in a country without the commitment of government and policy makers to considering the capabilities and aspirations of all citizens and especially the marginalized populations.

One of the findings from the literature is that although formal education is highly respected in Uganda, there is today a paradigm shift where the youth are becoming more conscious of the importance of technical vocational education and training. This is

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different from the negative attitude their elders have had for decades against technical vocational education.\textsuperscript{358}

Education will continue to be irrelevant in much of the developing world unless people stop to think on how they can design or reform education systems based on people’s aspirations, capabilities and the resources they have to make their plans possible.

Literature on technical vocational education and training (TVET) system in Uganda addresses many constraints that portray the lack of freedoms for people to do and be what they value. These institutions are underfunded, no enough teachers, gender inequalities within the system, shortage of qualified instructors, and use of untrained tutors and many other constraints and challenges that make like difficult for young people to enhance their capabilities so as to have a lifestyle they desire.\textsuperscript{359} All these are unfreedoms that cannot allow individuals in educational institutions to enhance their capacities. Without the freedom and rights that can give people space to do and be what they value, expecting human well-being in countries like Uganda would still be a dream to be achieved far from today.

Research has also shown that aspirations are important for governments, policy makers and all people to promote their human development. This is mainly in the sense that aspirations help individuals, groups and governments in selecting the capabilities they need to enhance so as to achieve what they are looking to achieving in their future human development, and also how they (aspirations) help in unlocking the agency that


\textsuperscript{359} Okinyal, op.cit. pp. 19-23.
people or governments need to make necessary changes in their lives, environments or countries. The interdependency of these two concepts aspirations and capabilities and the addition of the notions of human capital and human rights can be of great value if integrated in the Ugandan education system.

The idea of knowing people’s aspirations and capabilities is very important in designing education systems because people are able to find out young people’s ambitions and consider putting those students in the type of education that will fit their interests and also create an education that will enable them to enhance their capabilities in what they are able to do and be in life. This does not neglect the fact that the opportunity issue has also to be addressed. This is where Sen’s instrumental freedoms have to be brought into the discussion. People always have aspirations but at times, it is not possible to achieve those aspirations because there are constraints such as education, disability, geographical location and the financial resources that people have. This demands that people become realistic and consider the opportunities they have in their environment which may not necessary be in line with their individual aspirations. This means that we do not always need to be rigged with our aspirations and capabilities because at times things will not work out as we expect. People may have aspirations and capabilities and yet because of the environment, financial and cultural resources, they fail to accomplish their aspirations and enhance their capabilities.

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360 Conradie and Robeyns, op.cit. pp. 564-565.
Implications of the EHDCA Applied to BTVET Policy

Looking into the EHDCA within secondary school TVET can give some insights to education policy designers and reformers in Uganda to come up with an education system that could address the needs and interests of the people of Uganda. Tutesigensi suggests that the Government of Uganda, policy-makers, parents, students and all other partners in education have to ask themselves the following question, “What does Uganda and its people want young people in both lower and upper secondary to become?” This is a question that demands an answer from the parents, children, families, secondary school institutions, education policy makers and reformers, governments and all other partners in educating students in secondary education TVET. In that case, it is difficult to come up with a good TVET system of education for secondary school students when you do not have an idea of what they are to become. Students in TVET secondary in Uganda have aspirations and capabilities but education should come in as an instrument to enhance their capabilities so that they can become that to which they are focusing their attention.

The Uganda Government and policy makers in Uganda need to start designing the TVET policy when they are aware of the options to which their TVET secondary students are to become and the opportunities they have with their enhanced capabilities. This demands that partners in secondary school TVET are knowledgeable of the options that students have in TVET institutions. This would also imply that the curriculum and methodologies be directed to achieving those options that students, parents, and the government want to achieve. The knowledge of what the nation wants secondary students to become is also important for planning if the nations want to achieve their aspirations. There is need to
provide the education to people who are able to do the kind of jobs that will help the
nations to achieve what they have set up to achieve. At the same time, people have their
aspirations that they want to achieve. They would also be served well if they received an
education from their nations that would help them achieve their individual aspirations.
The challenge is to see how to balance individual aspirations and the nation’s aspirations
within the education policy.

The Government of Uganda and all stakeholders in secondary technical,
vocational education and training have always to look at education within the context of
human diversity so that they work together to have an education system that is inclusive.
This will help prepare students depending for their different destinations and depending
on their aspirations and capabilities. However, it is also important to know that at times
the government may have other priorities that are more urgent than education. Uganda
needs an education with a broader curriculum that will create options for many children
that are in secondary schools. It is from these many alternatives that secondary TVET
students are able to discern their aspiration and capability sets. Such a broader curriculum
with options comes with it the funding issues, which is a common challenge in the
developing countries. This is why it is important that all partners in education make
choices when they are aware of the resources they have to accomplish the choices made.
Students and all partners in education have to make sure that what they want to do and be
is consistent with their well-being as individuals, members of a community or as a nation.\textsuperscript{361}

It is not enough for Uganda to build institutions and contribute financial resources to facilitate vocational education in Uganda when vocational technical education in secondary schools is not valued. Education authorities in Uganda could improve the education practices within secondary education TVET schools, address the negative attitudes of all partners in education, and also address people’s ideologies about TVET. There is need to bring on board all partners in TVET education and prove to them that secondary education TVET is worthwhile embracing and that it would fulfill some people’s aspirations and enhance their capabilities.\textsuperscript{362}

In setting up secondary school TVET, the Ugandan government, policy makers and education reformers could also look into the different modes of provision for TVET to be able to accommodate all different kinds of people to attend at the convenient time. This would imply that they introduce technical vocational education programs that can accommodate people in terms of finance, time and other conveniences. For instance, such programs could be designed and conducted in such a way that they can accommodate evening students, part-time students; such programs could even accommodate adults who are in need of the knowledge and skills that such secondary vocational technical schools can offer. But all this will depend on what they have

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{361} Apollo Tutesigensi, Discussion with the researcher on secondary BTVET in Uganda, January 13, 2014. Tutesigensi is a Senior Lecturer in Engineering Project Management, University of Leeds, United Kingdom.

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discussed through public reasoning. This is very important because it gives everybody the opportunity to study what he/she is interested in and at his/her convenient time. The issue of opportunity in the EHDCA is very crucial for people to achieve their aspirations and enhance their capabilities and be able to enjoy their well-being.

If Uganda as a country is willing to exploit its secondary students’ potential, it needs to avoid determining students’ aspirations without exposing them to many possible alternatives from which they can build their aspirations. For instance, a policy could be designed in such a way that from primary one to senior three, children are exposed to many things in their curriculum so that they are exposed to many new areas. This could help them to be exposed to many options to aspire to and also to discover more of their capabilities. Students’ exposure to many options could help them to make choices when they are in the next level, for instance, senior four to senior six. At this level they could be allowed to make choices of their aspirations for which they want to achieve, and the capabilities they need to develop to achieve them. Those who continue to tertiary can think of advancing their level of capabilities to be able to do more complex things. Aspiration set can be broadened by exposing them to other alternatives so that they can have a wider set of aspirations and be able to look into themselves to find out the capabilities they have that can be enhanced to help them achieve the aspirations they value most, and the ones they know will give them the kind of opportunities they need in life. It would be difficult for a student to aspire to things which that student has not been exposed to and this in a way narrows his/her aspiration set. This implies that aspirations are built depending on the possible options for aspirations that an individual has had in
life. If Uganda is to exploit to the maximum the potential of their secondary vocational technical education and training students, the curriculum could be designed in such a way that students can see as many possible options for aspiration as possible to be able to find out what they would value most, so that at the end, they choose the most valuable to them and put aside others. There is, however, a situation whereby what people can aspire to in their environment could be outdated. TVET students are not going to advance their aspirations and enhance their capabilities if all they are seeing in their environment are the outdated systems.

Further, if secondary school TVET students are to benefit by the system and have their capabilities enhanced, vocational technical courses could be taught by people with the vocational technical professional knowhow. Young people at the secondary levels are not going to enhance their capabilities when their teachers are not competent enough to form them into the kind of people that the society in Uganda needs. Students in secondary education TVET will not perform at their best in innovation and creativity when they do not have the right training personnel to give them the skills and knowledge they need to excel in their diverse fields in secondary school TVET and at their places of work.

The Government of Uganda could start a campaign where it instills in students, parents and all partners in education the fact that there is no superior education in terms of vocational and general education. In fact, all Ugandans need to be helped to understand that these are different pathways that people take to achieve what they want to do or be in life. TVET and academic education are equally important. The important issue in education is what you do or become with the knowledge and skills you have
acquired in an education system. There are many cases where people do academic education and later change to vocational education because it is where they feel at home. This happens also in vocational education where some people do not find it a comfortable place for them and they change to academic education. Ugandans need to know that both vocational and academic educations are important and need to be integrated if people are to enhance their capabilities and achieve their aspirations. In that case, it does not matter to which track you belong but what matters is what you can do or what you can become with what you have learnt. Students, teachers, parents, guardians and governments ought to know that not all people are academics. The academic track is just one of the destinations for which education prepares students to achieve. In the language of the capability approach, it is one of the capabilities in education, but it does not mean that it is a superior capability to other capabilities in education. Other capabilities are also equally important and if enhanced can lead people to that which they want to do or become. This implies that the Government of Uganda and policy-makers need to address education capabilities with equal importance without discrimination.

There could also be some arrangement within secondary education TVET institutions where students can get support from their families, peers, neighbors and other adults with a sense of the value of TVET in society. This would involve assuring them that they can enhance their capabilities and achieve their aspirations by taking on the TVET system of education. However, those to support the young people in these institutions ought to be role models in society. This demands that the government of Uganda and other institutions work together to see that people play their role of
mentoring in secondary education TVET institutions. The selection of those to be mentors to the young should be agreed upon by parents, religious institutions and nongovernmental organizations in collaboration with the Government of Uganda.

The challenge that many education systems around the global have is to bring children, their families, educational institutions, religious and political institutions, and those designing education policies and reforms on board so that they can discern together the capabilities and career aspirations of children and youth. This would even necessitate some adjustments in the teaching programs in Uganda so that they are directed to helping the young people enhance their capabilities and achieve their aspirations depending on the opportunities they have in their locality.

One of the purposes of this study was to explore and further elaborate the normative conceptualization of the EHDCA to education. From this exploration, the EHDCA to education is found to be a person-centered model, which demands the integration of aspirations, human capabilities, human capital and human rights. This means that education policy makers and reformers would need to find ways of having these essential concepts integrated at different levels of education so that all students get the opportunities that can render them the kind of life they would like to live. This would obviously depend on several factors such as one’s expectations from an education system, the opportunities available in society, one’s geographical location, and the resources one has to enhance his/her capabilities and achieve his/aspiration. This is why I propose that looking at the significance of this conceptual work at two levels of managing an education system would be crucial for the proposed approach to education. The first
would be the policy level, which aims at giving direction to an education system of a country. The second level would be the operational level, which operation usually is derived from policy.

The challenge of education systems of many countries across the globe is that they still follow the traditional linear model of policy formation which focuses mainly on outcomes-based evaluations such as enrollments, qualification and job opportunities. Unfortunately, little is done to evaluate the processes of policy. This is why countries like Uganda need to rethink the ways in which they have formed their education policies, partners in formulating those policies, those whom education policies are meant to serve, and evaluating those policies to where they have worked and where they have not worked. These are the concerns of the enhanced HDCA model that is part of the aspirations-capabilities model. The implication is that Uganda should not only judge the outcomes of its education system but also look at the processes through which their policy is generated and how it is implemented to see whether it gives opportunities to all Ugandan citizens. It is from this perspective that I have hinted briefly on issues such as curriculum and funding in the exploration of the enhanced HDCA to as a model for education.

People have a diversity of capabilities and aspirations, which necessitates that education be designed in such a way that it creates as many options as possible and that individuals can have alternatives in which to enhance capabilities and achieve certain

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aspirations. However, Ugandans have to be aware of the fact that enhancing capabilities demands resources, which is always a challenge in many low-income countries.

Further, people need their right to education to be respected, and that is why human rights are necessary if people are to get the education they need. The enhanced HDCA model to education suggests that all members of society, without discrimination be given equal opportunities to have an education which will enable them to achieve a kind of lifestyle that will be meaningful to them. However, there is need to ensure that developing countries such as Uganda have an effective way of implementing people’s right to education and other rights that are associated to it. The challenge is that human rights can remain a challenge in dictatorial governments where the right to education may not be a priority to leaders.

The other issue of great importance in this study is that the EHDCA model brings to the attention of policy makers, governments and all partners in education that in education there should be a process of helping youth to identify their capabilities. Many do not know what they are capable of being and doing. Aspirations and capabilities are essential in any education policy design or reform to be able to open more doors for young people to have a wider range of opportunities and alternatives from which they can choose their valuable aspirations and the capabilities they have to achieve those aspirations.

As regards secondary education, the EHDCA suggests that students in secondary education be exposed to many new areas to be able to make choices that will serve their interests, capabilities and aspirations. But to ensure that all children have the
opportunities from which to make the choices of what they want to do or be, human rights are a good instrument. Young people cannot become what they are capable of being and doing unless they are availed with opportunities that will open to them more options. Young people in education institutions have to be exposed to the fundamentals so that they have a lot of things from which to choose their major aspirations. In that case, the education systems, for instance, could be designed in such a way that from primary one to senior three, children are exposed to many things that will expose them to many areas from which they can pick what to aspire to. The issue of how the levels are to be divided in addressing students’ aspirations and capabilities can be discussed by stakeholders in education. According to this study, students’ exposure to many options can help them to make choices when they are in the next level, which, in the case of Uganda would be senior four to senior six. At this level, they would make choices of aspirations for which they want to develop their capabilities. Those who continue to tertiary institutions can think of advancing their level of capabilities to be able to do more complex things.

Once aspirations and capabilities are accommodated in education policy and reforms, then, it means that education in practice has to follow what has been outlined in the education policy and reforms. The EHDCA model would, in that case, become the guide for education practice. Following this rationale, the curriculum, funding, pedagogies, recruitment of teachers, and all the inputs in education have to be seen in terms of enhancing people’s aspirations and capabilities and the opportunities they have in their environment, which will be in the guidelines enlisted in the policy document.
Partners in education need to get a better understanding of aspirations and human capabilities inclusive of notions of human capital and human rights so that they do not run a risk of uncritically accepting definitions and conceptions of the object under inquiry in this study. I am not saying that the EHDCA model is exhaustive but I present it as a step towards a more refined discussion about the purposes and functions of EHDCA model in education. The question of the EHDCA model to education remains important, not only for the development of good and meaningful education research but also for the practice of education itself in all its different forms and manifestations.

The EHDCA model brings to our attention another important issue that education systems ought to address in policy formulation or education reforms. The issue is that there is an interaction between aspirations, capabilities and the nature of the curriculum. Young people in society have different aspirations and different capabilities that demand different subject courses in their preparation for various destinations. This necessitates that countries establish education systems that are inclusive and broad so that all students can have access to opportunities that will be more meaningful to their lives.

Further, low income countries such as Uganda need to train professionals to lead through the identification of capabilities and aspirations of the youth in school. EHDCA suggests that education partners have a system to help people to identify their capabilities because many may not know what they are capable of doing and being, and the way to sort out their realistic aspirations. This is why the engagement in the discussion of the EHDCA would bring to the attention of partners in education the need to address aspirations and human capabilities in education systems.
In case of the opportunity issue, the EHDCA model demands that education institutions, governments and other stakeholders in education provide knowledge and skill development opportunities that will benefit students. This is why, from the EHDCA’s perspective, governments are to formulate education policies and reforms that can respond to the local opportunities that frame young people’s capabilities, who usually aspire to the opportunities available in their locality. It is this outlook of education that can lead to capability development and social development in individual communities or countries. The education system in Uganda may not be yielding the results/outcomes the Ugandan citizens expect because of not addressing some of the significant factors that influence practice; of which there is policy and traditional norms that might pattern people’s aspirations and capabilities. This is why it is quite important that policy formation be responsive to children and youth’s aspirations, at the same time responding to the available opportunities that young people have at their disposal. Governments and all stakeholders in education need to see that every child in secondary education BTVET receives sound educational opportunities that will enable him/her to acquire employment, or be self-employed, or be able to live a life with human dignity. However, we have to bear in mind the fact that the process needs countries and all other stakeholders need to have resources available to accomplish the task.

BTVET system of education is important for all nations especially the low-income countries. This is because it provides solutions to many problems that nations face such as workforce problems, secondary school dropouts, a weakened economy,
global competitiveness and massive layoffs.\textsuperscript{364} Using the EHDCA model, nations are able to address people’s aspirations, capabilities, human capital and human rights in their education systems so that students can achieve what they expect to get from that education. However, as Reed says, we need to keep in mind the fact that people tend to do what is accessible to them. They may have aspirations and the capabilities to achieve those aspirations and yet fail to get the educational/economic/environmental opportunities to accomplish those aspirations by using their capabilities.\textsuperscript{365} This is where the issue of conversional factors in development processes becomes crucial.

The other capability and aspiration obstacle that many students encounter in secondary education is students’ ignorance of the alternatives. Many secondary school students would have a lot to discover in their capability and aspiration sets if they were provided with knowledge to discover their potential and capabilities. This is why it would be important for an education system to provide this information to students when they are still young so that they can do which way to follow as they progress in their education endeavor. Teachers, parents, career counselors can do a good job by directing these students to paths that would meet their interests and capabilities; however, they should be humble enough to accept certain positions when students seem to be seeing beyond what they can see.\textsuperscript{366} There are, for instance students in Uganda who have been successful in achieving their aspirations through their education system. However, there are others who

\textsuperscript{364} Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), “CTE: Education for a Strong Economy,


\textsuperscript{366} Ibid.
have had to take other alternatives that have led them to better places or jobs. People in education need to think of plan B and C if plan A does not work out. Education in the EHDCA is a tool that can help us to modify our aspirations and capabilities where there are signs that it may be difficult to achieve those aspirations we are aspiring to. Many Ugandan secondary school students drop out of because of lack of resources, while others fail because of their academic and vocational ability. From this perspective, it would mean that all Ugandan children, policy makers and other stakeholders in education need to ensure that they have realistic aspirations that can be achieved depending on their access to resources, ability, and the opportunities they have in their geographical environment. It would be unrealistic for an individual of achieving his/her well-being or success if one is caught up in aspiration and capability obstacles.

Because I looked at aspirations and capabilities of abled students within the context of secondary vocational education, this study could be replicated with the various education levels. The study of the value system among the population is very urgent if we are to use the EHDCA to education. People aspire to what they value, and development itself is the process that enables people to live the lives they have reason to value, but the question that needs to be studied is how one’s value system is formulated.
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