

Appropriate Education



Education that fosters **Innovativeness and Creativity**

Project



Baobab

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Introduction- Current Education System

- The Kenyan education system is based on an 8-4-4 system
- Modeled from the British system
- *Exam-centric* approach to learning
- Rigorous schooling for children through long hours of school
- Cramming and memorization.
- Success in education is defined by the attainment of white color jobs

Continued...

- Accessibility to and success in Education are purely based on socio-economic factors
- The well to do - can afford to attend well-funded and well-equipped institutions
- The poor - attend poorly funded and under-equipped schools
- Social, cultural and civic education are not accommodated
- National and cultural pride are not part and parcel of our curriculum
- The more 'westernized' you are, the more 'educated' you are perceived to be

Higher Education in Kenya

- Kenya has a total of six public universities and 16 private universities
- The capacity of the higher education sector in Kenya is still limited and accommodates only 7.5% of students graduating from secondary schools (World Bank)
- Therefore, access to higher education in Kenya is extremely competitive
- Additionally, the cost of higher education in the public universities has consistently increased, leaving out the poor.

What is Appropriate Education:

- Takes into consideration the social, economic, cultural and political realities
- Provides students with relevant tools and resources to allow them to translate those realities into their everyday lives
- Considers the diverse social-cultural values and attitudes of a people and constructs an education that is appropriate for that environment.
- Allows teachers and students to socially construct their own realities and develop their own definitions of what learning is.
- Helps a people identify their local problems and find their own sustainable local solutions.

Project Baobab - A Case Study

- PB provides free education and entrepreneurial grants to young people through a specialized curriculum taught in a few secondary schools in Kenya.
- PB has developed these programs in rural and poor urban schools
- Has recently expanded the programs to community women & to the Langata Women's Prison
- PB has 4 main program components:
 - Life Skills Course
 - Entrepreneurial Skills Course
 - Start-up Funding
 - Tracking and Mentoring

Life-Skills

- This course teaches students self-esteem & increases their self-confidence. Some of the topics include:
 - Confidence Building
 - Goal Setting & Accomplishment
 - Gender Empowerment
 - Communication & Networking
 - Decision -Making & Time Management
 - Democracy & Human Rights Skills
 - Information on HIV/Aids
 - Stress Management
 - Basic Leadership Skills & Conflict Management
 - Group Dynamics & Teamwork

Entrepreneurial Skills Course

- Entrepreneurial Skills course is taught in the fourth year of secondary school
- Students learn job readiness, business planning and development skills, and are encouraged to explore options for economic independence.
- Specifically, this course aims to equip students with theoretical and practical knowledge, which will help the students to:
 - Appreciate the importance of self-employment
 - Identify business opportunities that they can venture into
 - Prepare a business plan
 - Start and manage a business enterprise

Start-up Funding

- Upon graduation, students submit business plans to a committee from the local business community and Project Baobab staff and partners
- The most promising enterprises are recommended for start-up funding from Project Baobab.
- Each year 30% of trainees with outstanding business plans, receive grants of \$100 (U.S.) each
- Those funded are monitored and mentored by trackers who assure that the businesses are still operational and document the successes and/or failures of the businesses.

Findings

- About 50% of the grantees are running businesses with good to marginal success.
- About 20% of the businesses are not operating
- More than 50% of students stated that the Life-Skills topics were completely relevant in their day-to-day lives.
- Even the students who did not receive the start-up grants felt that the training was worth their time
- Some used their own resources to start their own small businesses
- Many students felt the time allocated for the training was not enough.
- Some of the students expressed interest in capacity building - This can be done through refresher training and mentoring.

Teachers:

- Acquired skills in entrepreneurship. Some have gone into business as a result.
- Brought in a sense of "self-fulfillment"
- Feel that the work that they do allows them to have a better interaction with their students
- Feel motivated to widen their knowledge and skills beyond the Teacher Service Commission.
- Some have started small consulting services
- One has recently completed her graduate degree in entrepreneurship.

PB Achievements

- Taught 323 young women through Life Skills and/or Entrepreneurial Skills courses since 2001
- Funded more than 133 new business ventures, at least half of which remain operational
- Established its curricula in six schools
- Compensated all participating schools and teachers with appropriate stipends
- Has been approached by Technoserve, an International organization to expand its model to 5 additional schools and 5 community sites in Kenya

Challenges

- Our society has been socialized to look down at blue color jobs and "self-employment"
- The current education program is too 'demanding' - PB students have little time to devote to the program
- It is difficult and expensive to track the grantees
- PB Teachers are also TSC teachers and are sometimes transferred to other schools





So What?

- PB is not a proposed replacement to the current education system
- It provides a platform for debate on alternative approaches to education, especially to socially and economically marginalized communities
- It allows us to debate on the gaps that exist in our current education
- Above all, it provides opportunities to those who would otherwise be left out due to their socio-economic circumstances

Contact

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