

## Education privatization in sub-Saharan Africa: Agendas, policies and trends

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Education, and in particular the provision of quality education, has cut across educational agendas in the last thirty years. As such, education has been elected as a priority by bilateral, multilateral and civil society organizations (e.g., UNICEF, World Bank, Save the Children, Plan International, NORAD, Global Partnership for Education).

Since the late 20th century, education has also become a field of market engagement with international and regional organizations playing an active role in building a global education architecture and in promoting the emergence of a global education policy space. This global architecture includes a myriad of organizations that can interconnect several agendas such as choice, freedom, and education as a right.

In this context, education privatization can be seen as a phenomenon that is expanding internationally. Privatization *of* education has been defined as an increase in the ownership of education by private actors, resulting in an increase in the proportion of private actors involved in an education system. There is also privatization *in* education, which corresponds to the introduction of methods, principles and approaches from the market sector into education. At the same time, reference can be made to the commodification of education, which involves the transformation of education into a market product that generates profits.

Globally, education privatization arises in different forms such as: low-fee private schooling, public-private and multiple stakeholder partnerships, supplemental private tutoring (shadow education), school vouchers and targeted subsidies which enable private or government-assisted private school choice.

Although much has been written relating to education privatization in sub-Saharan Africa, there is need of a systematic review of the several factors and rationales and of the different forms in which non-state actors have been involved in education in sub-Saharan Africa over time. This book will therefore pay particular attention to education privatization in this specific region, by also focusing on Francophone and Lusophone countries which have so far been particularly underrepresented in Comparative and International Education literature, particularly in English.

With regard to theory, the purpose of this book is to bring together a diversity of approaches, to clarify their foundational assumptions and insights, and to bring them into dialogue in order to draw attention to the way these approaches can also be seen as problematic (e.g., in terms of whose knowledge, politics, or worldview is being advanced). This will be accomplished by including a carefully selected collection of recent empirical studies that have been conducted from different theoretical perspectives. In this way, the book provides contemporary empirical insights into the phenomenon of education privatization in sub-Saharan Africa with a critical analysis without a split between pros and cons. One point of interest will be discussions that examine how the public is implicated in this privatization process, either by not taking into

consideration the issues of quality and inclusion, or by introducing private sector mechanisms into the public sector. Analyses of the implications and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education privatization landscape in sub-Saharan Africa will also be greatly appreciated.

The book also seeks to highlight the limitations of different approaches and to reflect on the implications of their conceptual horizons to education policy in the countries under scrutiny and more broadly in sub-Saharan Africa.

By mixing theoretical and empirical aspects, the book seeks to: (a) serve as a key resource on the topic of education privatization in sub-Saharan Africa, including in Lusophone and Francophone countries (b) clarify - and problematize - the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions of different approaches to understanding education privatization, and (c) push forward education privatization research. The book aims to make a significant contribution by discussing, from varied theoretical perspectives, how education privatization emerges in sub-Saharan Africa and how it evolves over time.

Analytically, what binds the chapters of this volume together is a shared interest in the study of how globalization has altered the way we think about education in a context of economic financialization. Chapter proposals will be selected on the basis of two criteria: first, the provision of in-depth empirical research on the phenomenon of education privatization and, second, the provision of a theoretical contribution towards the clearer understanding of this phenomenon in the context of sub-Saharan Africa.

#### **Questions at the heart of the book:**

- 1) How are private companies, foundations, businesses, communities, Civil Society Organizations participating in the education sector in sub-Saharan Africa, including also in Lusophone and Francophone countries?
- 2) Which type of private actors exist and how are they involved in education?
- 3) What are the rationales behind the involvement of private actors in the education sector in sub-Saharan Africa?
- 4) Are States adopting education privatization policies? If so, what are the global and domestic forces, and the cultural, political, historical, and economic factors which influence these policies?
- 5) Who are the key agents that promote education privatization, at what political level do they strategically intervene, and how?
- 6) How is the phenomenon of privatization in the field of education conceptualized in international literature regarding education and development? Are there any theoretical gaps?
- 7) What are the main mechanisms of education privatization in Sub-Saharan Africa and why do they arise?
- 8) What conditions facilitate or discourage the spread of the education privatization?
- 9) Through which methodological strategies and research tools, do scholars investigate education privatization in sub-Saharan Africa?

#### **Publisher:**

For the publication of this book, a contract with a reputable international publisher will be ensured.

**Timeline:**

- a. Call for chapter proposals – June 2022
- b. Chapter proposals due – September 15, 2022
- c. Notification of selected contributors – September 30, 2022
- d. First draft full chapters due – December 15, 2022
- e. Editors' feedback due – February 15, 2023
- f. Revised chapters due – March 31, 2023
- g. Submission to the publisher – May 31, 2023

Full chapters will be between 7.000 and 8.000-words long, including references.

**Proposal submission:**

Please submit a 500-word proposal in English, providing an overview of the proposed chapter including:

- proposed chapter title;
- description of the chosen empirical case study *and/or* theoretical and methodological approach to be taken in the analysis;
- key research questions/gaps addressed;
- contribution of the chapter to the theme of this volume;
- 5 references;
- author bio(s) (100 words maximum) or link to a webpage with bio(s) - maximum of 4 authors.

Please note that chapter proposals are to be sent to [eduprivatization.africa@gmail.com](mailto:eduprivatization.africa@gmail.com) and are due by 15 September 2022.