

**REPORT ON THE CURRENT STATE OF
HISTORY TEACHING IN AFRICA**

**Pedagogical use of the *General History
of Africa***

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Introduction

1. *The reasons for this evaluation*

The education systems in Africa, after the colonial and post-colonial past of those countries, display considerable disparity with regard to the division of pupils into levels, the duration of each level or cycle, the importance given to History as a subject, the languages in which it is taught and school textbooks, etc. Furthermore, while a number of African countries have, since their independence, undertaken reforms aimed at improving or overhauling their education systems, others have attempted to renew or change school curricula for history teaching. What is more, there has been on overall evaluation focusing on the teaching of African history. Studies and reports available to us at present are either obsolete or incomplete. It is for all these reasons that it struck us as being necessary to attempt an inventory of history teaching in general and of African history in particular. This evaluation has therefore proved indispensable for the launching of the second phase of the General History of Africa (GHA) which focuses on its pedagogical use.

This pedagogical use is aimed not only at introducing an African perspective and therefore a regional dimension in the teaching of African history, but also at contributing to the renovation of history teaching and teacher training.

2. *The choice of a questionnaire*

The studies available to us within the context of the GHA have remained general in nature insofar as they do not contain precise, numerical or comprehensive data covering the continent as a whole. The information therein is often limited to observations, rough estimates or surveys limited to a particular group of countries. If we want more accurate quantitative and qualitative data, covering all the questions regarding renovation and dealing with all of the African countries, it appeared crucial to have recourse to a type of questionnaire that would include questions that were both open and closed. The operating mode for the questionnaire is quite simply that which facilitates a methodical collection of relevant and precise information. Accordingly, each State, through its education departments and on the basis of the expertise and didactic and pedagogical experience of all its experts, provided us with responses which enabled us to make comparisons and attempt analyses.

This revealed the similarities, differences, even conflicts, between the future paths and prospects. The responses were brought to the notice of the whole education community of the continent and constitutes a valuable tool for reflection on the future.

We hope that the exploitation of this questionnaire will provide clear, useful possibly decisive information for those who will have the task of drafting pedagogical material in the context of this project.

3. *Preparation and dispatch of the questionnaire*

In our endeavour to produce a consensual questionnaire, we adopted a participative approach and went through various stages. The questionnaire was first the subject of many consultations between the relevant departments of UNESCO (the Education,

Social and Human Sciences Sectors and UNESCO's International Education Bureau). Subsequently, there were several exchanges between UNESCO, the members of the inter-sectoral coordination group and of the scientific committee of the project, together with external experts consulted in this regard. This enabled us to cover every aspect of the problem and to arrive at an easily usable questionnaire.

Out of a total of 53 States, 52 received the questionnaire and 44 States responded, more or less rigorously, namely 84.4%. Responses to the questionnaire reached us over a period of eight months between the first dispatch on 6 August 2009 and the last response was received on 25 March 2010. To achieve this, no less than 14 messages were sent during that period to remind latecomers that their responses were awaited.

Analysis of the responses

1. *Description of the questionnaire*

The questionnaire decided upon is divided into seven main chapters comprising a total of 32 questions, many of which were multiple choice questions, which meant that at the end of the process, no less than 160 responses were to be dealt with which each of the 44 States was required to provide. By conducting a quantitative count of all of the responses, we dealt with no less than 6,880 responses, without forgetting the commentaries which accompanied all the questions.

The seven chapters provide a global follow-up of the education system and history teaching through all pedagogical and didactic aspects which bring together students and teachers on their path towards the same goal.

Chapter I, comprising two questions, focuses on the organization of the education system in each country. It reveals the structure of the system, the ages of entry into primary and secondary education and the duration of studies at each level, to arrive at a total duration of schooling from the beginning of primary to the end of secondary studies.

Chapter II centres around history teaching in the educational curriculum. Made up of seven questions, it provides an opportunity to assess the importance of the subject in the system.

Chapter III focusses on the content of history teaching; it describes precisely the role and more particularly the content of this discipline on two levels: the content of history in general and that of African history in particular. This particularly vital chapter, comprising nine questions, helps to assess what is the position of African history in education.

Chapter IV, comprising six questions, deals with the didactics of history and highlights the different types of methodology applied to history teaching and with the learning methods of textbooks.

Chapter V: this deals with teacher training. Via two questions, it provides an assessment of the standard of diplomas and the need for teacher training institutions.

Chapter VI: one of the essential issues for the dynamism of history teaching is dealt with in this particular chapter focusing on plans to revise curricula and teaching textbooks, one of the weaknesses of the African education system.

Chapter VII, lastly, entitled "Questions of personal assessment" is aimed via four controversial questions, to establish, firstly, an assessment of history teaching in primary and secondary education, and secondly, to ascertain what could improve history teaching. Finally, it is a matter of knowing whether the relevance of a common curriculum could contribute to such an improvement and what the GHA could contribute to this vast trend of renewal.

2. *Analysis and commentaries*

In most cases, responses were positive on the need to renovate history teaching, combined nevertheless with specific requests for assistance to improve the system. Responses approved the fortunate initiatives taken by the UNESCO institutions relating to a common curriculum as well as the relevance of the GHA as a vital support.

For further information, you are invited to refer to the annex to the questionnaire and to the responses from Member States annexed to this document. We would recommend that these responses be read attentively as they provide interesting data on the diversity of situations and points of view as well as on a number of convergences and similarities.

In the meantime, you will find below a brief analysis of the responses to the 32 questions in the questionnaire.

Chapter I: Organization of the Education System

Question 1: What is the structure of your education system?

44 countries responded to the questionnaire. Five did not answer the first question or answered irrelevantly. The other 39 countries had education levels extending from 2 to 5. One country provided no details whatsoever of the various education levels and merely stated "all levels from primary to higher".

Given that the levels declared in the responses extend from 2 to 5, how can such a response be translated into figures which would validate the 39 other responses in a global analysis? Furthermore, the terms "higher" and "university" are sometimes mixed up; but separate in other instances!

In all, 4 levels are more commonly chosen, namely (47.3%); followed by 3 levels (36.84%); 5 levels (13.15%); and 2 levels (2.63%).

Among the structures of education levels, primary and secondary come out top, each with 88.6% of choices; the preschool and nursery levels account for 54.5% of

choices. Efforts should be made to extend these in order to give greater opportunities to children. University education comes close to 66% (65.9% exactly). Technical and vocational education only amounts to 11.4% of choices. In this instance, it is the colonial heritage which had chosen a relatively elitist, more general type of education, which the African States will have difficulty to rid themselves of, except in the case of most of the English-speaking countries, to a certain degree.

History is therefore taught as a separate subject in more than 88% of African countries at lower secondary level, and in more than a third of the countries in primary education. In half of the countries which responded, history is combined with geography in primary school, but the percentage is less than 40% in lower secondary and less than 12% in higher secondary. There are only 11 countries (11%) in primary, 9 in lower secondary and only 5 in higher secondary where history is taught as a social sciences subject.

Question 2: Age requirement for entry into and duration of the primary and lower secondary and higher secondary levels

Children enter this level usually at the age of 6 and the duration of the cycle is between 5 and 8 years. It is normally around the age of 12 that the lower secondary cycle begins and at 15 for the higher secondary cycle. The duration of each of these cycles is from 2 to 4 years. At this level, Africa is not particularly poorly off by comparison with other continents. Nevertheless, efforts have yet to be made in the field of pre-primary education.

In all events, a close study of this chapter reveals a number of extremely varied situations. Firstly, in the structure of education levels and among the reforms undertaken recently in several States, the entry age to primary education up to the end of secondary, and the duration of studies in the two cycles, do not vary between the English-speaking and French-speaking systems. It is in the content of these levels that initial major differences would seem to emerge. The layman's initial impression is that as regards common practice in the French-speaking states, education levels in the English-speaking countries would seem to be rather overloaded, even complex. Some would say quite simply that they are more comprehensive, explicit and more detailed. We have but to consider them as such.

Chapter II: History Teaching within the National Education Curriculum

Question 3: In your country, how is history/related subject taught?

History is taught as a single subject in 16 countries, which amounts to 36.3%, in primary, in 26 countries (59%) in lower secondary, and in 34 countries (i.e. 77.2%) in higher secondary.

When combined with geography, the percentages are inverted but not in an identical fashion. Hence, history is taught with geography in 22 countries, in 50% of cases, in primary education; in 17 countries (38.6%) in lower secondary and in 5 countries (11.36%) in higher secondary.

History is taught as a social sciences subject in 11 countries (25%) in primary education; in 9 countries (20.45%) in lower secondary and in 5 countries (11.35%) in higher secondary.

Combining history with literature is not popular as it is the case in only one country (2.27%) in primary; in 2 countries (4.54%) in lower secondary and in 2 countries (4.54%) in higher secondary.

Question 4: *What is the status of history/related subject teaching?*

The teaching of history as a compulsory subject is a majority of cases; it accounts for 88.6% in primary, 81.8% in lower secondary and 61.3% in higher secondary.

Optional: 9.3% (lower secondary), 22.7% (higher secondary).

Elective: 7% (lower secondary), 19.6% (higher secondary).

Is this an error or a misunderstanding? Each country should have chosen a single response per level; there should therefore have been a maximum number of responses per column, namely 44! That, however, is not the case. Furthermore, it is in the English-speaking countries that the two latter choices are the most popular.

Question 5: *In your country, how is the history/related subject reflected in education?*

The history/related subject curriculum is clearly evident: 41 countries (amounting to 93%) in the school curricula per level; it is also to be found in the textbooks: 38 countries (i.e. 86%) and in 36 countries (81%) in the teachers' manuals. Two countries noted that the school history curriculum was to be found in *other fields* without giving details. History is clearly present in African school curricula which displays clear awareness of the importance of the collective memory and lessons to be drawn from the past.

Question 6: *What is the status of the history/related subject curriculum in place in your country?*

The fact that the State should take responsibility for devising the official history teaching curriculum for an entire country is widely recognized to a degree of 93.18% as that is the case in 41 of the 44 countries which answered the questionnaire. In 9 countries, i.e. in 20.45% of cases, it means a basic curriculum for the whole country with possibilities to adapt it at regional level to ensure greater flexibility in response to local expectations.

This illustrates the degree to which the concern for national unity and more particularly cohesion is one of the major preoccupations of the African States.

Question 7: *Which entity is in charge of drafting the history/related subject curriculum?*

The entity in charge of drafting the curriculum is a department of the ministry of education in 35 countries, that is to say in 79.54% of cases; in 11 countries (25%) a

specialized pedagogical institute, under the authority of the ministry of education. In all, the part played by the State is very extensive in this field. The role played by a regional or provincial committee cannot be neglected, however, as it amounts to 9%, or even a teachers' organization which also accounts for 9% of such activities.

Question 8: *In your country, who supervises the implementation of the history/related subject curriculum?*

Supervision of the implementation of the curriculum is undertaken by a specialized department of the ministry of education in 39 countries, i.e. in 88.6% of cases; it is provided by the Inspectorate General in 23 countries (52.27%), by a pedagogical evaluation institution in 5 countries (11.36%), and by the schools themselves in 10 countries, i.e. 22.72% of cases.

The role of the State via the ministry of education, remains predominant in almost 88% of cases. An ideal situation would be that this task should fall jointly to the General Inspectorate, the pedagogical evaluation institution and the schools (whose share is too limited) in order to ensure a more balanced consensual pedagogical view, based on skills and experience in the field.

Question 9: *How is teaching of history/related subject evaluated?*

The importance of evaluation is confirmed by the high percentage of countries questioned referring to such evaluation: 38 out of 44, namely 86.3%, through the various verification authorities such as the General Inspectorates, the Inspectorates and pedagogical advisers, the examination authorities, etc. Three countries do not proceed with evaluation (6.8%). What matters is that there should be evaluation to measure the quality of knowledge acquired and to ensure improvements in learning processes in the future. It is vital to know not only who conducts such evaluation but also according to what aims and at what pace it is actually performed. These elements, however, do not appear in the commentaries produced by the countries which replied to the questionnaire.

Chapter III: Content of history teaching, in general

Question 10: *What are the main objectives of the history/related subject teaching in your country?*

Of the five declared objectives, three are popular: (a) inculcating a sound understanding of the past and its relevance for the present and future: 42 countries out of 44 (95.45%); (b) developing a capacity for reflection and critical analysis: 36 countries out of 44 (81.8%); (d) promoting values, behaviour and skills conducive to learning to live together: 41 countries out of 44 (93.18%). The two others represent respectively: (c) forging a strong sense of pride/patriotism in belonging to a community: 36 countries (81.8%); (e) instilling a sense of African citizenship: 34 countries (77.27%).

Here are very interesting responses that reveal the concern of African States to develop, firstly, qualities of intelligence, a sense of responsibility and high moral

values in relation to others, and secondly, to emphasise patriotic qualities and a sense of African citizenship.

Question 11: What does history/related subject teaching focus on?

- Local history:
 - primary: 32 countries (72.7%);
 - lower secondary: 23 countries (52.27%);
 - higher secondary: 19 countries (43.18%);
- National history:
 - primary: 34 countries (72.27%);
 - lower secondary: 34 countries (72.27%);
 - higher secondary: 34 countries (72.27%);
- Sub-regional history:
 - primary: 21 countries (47.7%);
 - lower secondary: 30 countries (68.18%);
 - higher secondary: 28 countries (63.6%);
- History of the African continent:
 - primary: 20 countries (45.4%);
 - lower secondary: 33 countries (75%);
 - higher secondary: 37 countries (84%);
- History of other continents:
 - primary: 12 countries (27.27%);
 - lower secondary: 32 countries (72.7%);
 - higher secondary: 37 countries (84%).

Local and national history arouse more interest in primary education than sub-regional history or that of the African continent or other continents. In contrast, sub-regional history, that of the African continent and of other continents are relatively more highlighted in lower and higher secondary education. This would seem to be confirmed when the figures are viewed differently, namely that, beyond national borders, history is far from being neglected as in secondary education, subregional history, that of Africa and that of other continents, range from to 68% to 84%.

Question 12: Is history/related subject teaching taught throughout the year... or part of the year... number of hours, duration?

Out of the 44 States which responded to the official questionnaire, 38 (i.e. 86.3%) responded to this question in four different ways:

- in hours per week, as specified in the question;
- in **minutes** (e.g. 280 minutes/week)!
- in lessons per week (e.g. 4 lessons/week);
- in hours/year (e.g. 45hrs to 150 hrs)

without providing the slightest detail in the last three responses on the length of the classes, the weekly distribution of history classes and that of the number of minutes per lesson. The situation is all the more confusing when it is observed that 5 States (11.3% of responses) do not provide any hourly indication in this regard. Is it negligence or forgetfulness? We assume that it is forgetfulness. Furthermore, we

have observed that one particular State does not grant more than one hour per week of history in primary education and nothing at all in the lower and higher secondary levels!

These hourly quotas refer to the three cycles: primary, lower secondary and higher secondary. As such they offer too large a scope for primary education when history is taught there: situations vary from half an hour to four hours/week. The difference would appear to be quite considerable in primary education.

More generally speaking, evidence points to the fact that average weekly hours are of 2h10 for primary; 2h45 for lower secondary and 3h50 for higher secondary. It goes without saying that our pupils, whether in primary or secondary education, do not all enjoy the same benefits when it comes to hours of history teaching. In this instance, weekly lessons vary between 3h and 15h!

Question 13: What is the approach used for history/related subject teaching: thematic, chronological or the two combined?

- (a) thematic approach:
 - primary: 17 countries (36.6%);
 - lower secondary: 12 countries (27.27%);
 - higher secondary: 10 countries (22.72%);
- (b) chronological approach:
 - primary: 11 countries (25%);
 - lower secondary: 10 countries (22.72%);
 - higher secondary: 8 countries (18.18%);
- (c) the two approaches combined:
 - primary: 18 countries (40.9%);
 - lower secondary: 27 countries (61.36%);
 - higher secondary: 33 countries (75%).

Only one country (2.27%) uses another approach, the so-called "skills-based approach".

The choices suggest supplementary pedagogical practice. The English-speaking countries tend towards a more chronological approach in secondary education.

Question 14: What are the main themes addressed in history/related subject teaching in general?

The objective or objectives are not clearly defined in this question. The data supplied, displayed both horizontally and vertically, make up a model which is difficult to exploit as such.

It should be noted, however, that the most widely quoted themes are prehistory and the history of antiquity; the major empires, the middle ages, Islam; colonization; resistance movements, decolonization; the slave trade; the two world wars; and apartheid as well as socio-economic themes, including underdevelopment and poverty, democracy, etc.

Question 15: What are the themes dealt with in the history/related subject?

- Prehistory:
 - primary: 20 countries (45.45%);
 - lower secondary: 32 countries (72.7%);
 - higher secondary: 24 countries (54.5%);
- Pre-colonial Africa:
 - primary: 25 countries (56.85%);
 - lower secondary: 35 countries (79.5%);
 - higher secondary: 39 countries (88.6%);
- The slave trade and slavery:
 - primary: 20 countries (45.45%);
 - lower secondary: 33 countries (75%);
 - higher secondary: 28 countries (63.6%);
- European colonization:
 - primary: 24 countries (54.5%)
 - lower secondary: 39 countries (88.6%);
 - higher secondary: 38 countries (86.36%);
- Decolonization:
 - primary: 15 countries (34.09%);
 - lower secondary: 34 countries (77.27%);
 - higher secondary: 36 countries (81.8%);
- apartheid:
 - primary: 4 countries (9.09%);
 - lower secondary: 12 countries (27.27%);
 - higher secondary: 21 countries (47.7%);
- Africa-Asia relations:
 - primary: 3 countries (6.8%);
 - lower secondary: 20 countries (45.45%);
 - higher secondary: 26 countries (59.09%);
- Contemporary Africa:
 - primary: 9 countries (20.45%)
 - lower secondary: 38 countries (86.36%);
 - higher secondary: 30 countries (68.18%).

Prehistory is not tackled very much although it does illicit some interest in primary education, whereas it declines in lower and higher secondary. Pre-colonial history is favoured in primary education whereas it illicit little interest in lower and higher secondary education. Four situations which we would qualify as sensitive (the slave trade and slavery, colonization and decolonization and apartheid) record rates which are not particularly high in primary education. This is somewhat surprising in comparison with figures under question 11 and particularly criticism levelled at Europe and the way it looks upon Africans in regard to these sensitive issues.

Question 16: In your country, is the General History of Africa published by UNESCO known by history/related subject teachers?

39 responses out of 44; yes:19; no: 20; 6 countries did not reply to the question.

45.45% of countries responded that they were not familiar with this work, while certain countries asserted that they had never heard of it. Bad news to say the least!

Question 17: *In your country, are the volumes the General History of Africa published by UNESCO available and/or affordable to history/related subject teachers?*

41 responses out of 44; yes: 11; no: 30; 3 countries did not respond.

A preoccupying situation therefore, in total contradiction with the responses supplied to questions 31 et 32. These responses confirm the observation that the GHA collection is scarcely available in Africa. To all intents and purposes, everything must be done to ensure that all circuits have access to the GHA volumes as widely as possible.

Question 18: *Is the GHA exploited pedagogically?*

- (a) The GHA is exploited for pedagogical purposes in:
- primary: 1 country (2.27%);
 - lower secondary: 5 countries (11.36%);
 - higher secondary: 7 countries (15.9%);
- (b) It is little used in:
- primary: 12 countries (27.27%);
 - lower secondary: 6 countries (13.6%);
 - higher secondary: 17 countries (38.6%);
- (c) It is not used at all in:
- primary: 9 countries (20.45%);
 - lower secondary: 12 countries (27.27%);
 - higher secondary: 5 countries (11.36%).

Accordingly, with the exception of a single country which uses it in primary education and 12 others which use it in secondary, the GHA is not used for pedagogical purposes.

Chapter IV: Didactics of History: approaches and pedagogical tools for history/related subject teaching

Question 19: *What approaches are used for history/related subject teaching?*

A single question, many responses; percentages have been calculated on the basis of 218 responses collated in absolute terms:

- lectures: 34 pays (77.17%);
- use of documents derived from the oral tradition: 28 countries (63.6%);
- use of historical figures and dates: 41 countries (93.18%);
- research projects: 21 countries (47.7%);
- field trips and spacial landmarks: 34 countries (77.17%);
- historical reconstitution: 28 countries (63.6%);
- discussion with external contributors: 27 countries (61.36%);
- others: 5 countries (11.36%).

The use of historical figures and dates is far greater than any other means (93.18%); lectures and field visits are on an equal footing (77.17%). Reference to the oral tradition and to historical reconstitution are on an equal footing (63.6%). Debates with external contributors amount to 61% while research projects only attain 11.36%.

What these results display is an impression of dynamic and interactive pedagogy which brings into play the intellectual resources of the students with practical aspects; praiseworthy approaches as indicated under c-e-b-f-g.

This, however, warrants two remarks from a didactic point of view: first, the effect of lectures in relation to other approaches and, subsequently, the limited use of research projects. Evidence suggests that major efforts have yet to be made in the field of history didactics, particularly with regard to questions 20 and 21, in the face of shortages of documents and pedagogical material in general.

Question 20: *Do history/related subject curricula and textbooks facilitate/encourage work based on the following?*

- original African written archives (% of responses in absolute terms): yes: 29 countries out of 44 (65.9%); no: 32 countries out of 44 (72.7%);
- African cultural productions: yes: 28 countries out of 44 (63.6%); non: 12 countries out of 44 (27.27%).

To all intents and purposes, encouragement to work on archive documents and cultural productions falls below what could be expected. Placing emphasis on teacher training in the use of archive documents or documents of any other origin would be a short-term imperative as it is not a technique that comes spontaneously. Putting all the relevant documentation at the disposal of teachers and students.

Question 21: *What type of pedagogical materials is used in history/related subject teaching?*

- textbooks elaborated by the State:
 - primary: 36 countries (81.8%);
 - lower secondary: 36 countries (81.8%);
 - higher secondary: 12 countries (27.27%);
- textbooks designed for foreign learners:
 - primary: 7 countries (15.9%);
 - lower secondary: 14 countries (31.8%);
 - higher secondary: 19 countries (43.18%);
- teacher guides:
 - primary: 30 countries (68.18%);
 - lower secondary: 28 countries (63.6%);
 - higher secondary: 20 countries (45.45%);
- teacher-created pedagogical documents:
 - primary: 19 countries (43.18%);
 - lower secondary: 20 countries (45.45%);
 - higher secondary: 25 countries (56.8%);
- CD ROMs:

- primary: 6 countries (13.6%);
- lower secondary: 8 countries (18.18%);
- higher secondary: 8 countries (18.18%);
- historical maps:
 - primary: 29 countries (65.9%);
 - lower secondary: 31 countries (70.45%);
 - higher secondary: 30 countries (68.18%);
- anthologies:
 - primary: 4 countries (9.09%);
 - lower secondary: 9 countries (20.45%);
 - higher secondary: 10 countries (22.7%);
- African oral traditions:
 - primary: 24 countries (54.54%);
 - lower secondary: 21 countries (47.7%);
 - higher secondary: 22 countries (50%);
- multimedia:
 - primary: 9 countries (20.45%);
 - lower secondary: 10 countries (22.7%);
 - higher secondary: 11 countries (25%);
- illustrated documents (comics, portraits...):
 - primary: 25 countries (56.8%);
 - lower secondary: 24 countries (54.54%);
 - higher secondary: 15 countries (34.09%).

State-produced textbooks come first with 81.18% as a rate of use in primary education, an equivalent figure in lower secondary, with 1% less; limited appeal in higher secondary with 27.27%. Teacher guides come second as far as pedagogical material used with 68% in primary, 14% in lower secondary and 11.6% in higher secondary; in third position, there are historical maps at 15.2% in primary, 63% in lower secondary and 45% in higher secondary. Oral traditions rank fourth. Teachers make up for insufficiencies in this field by reverting to their own material. Evidence suggests weaknesses in the use of textbooks designed for foreign learners, CD ROMs, anthologies and the multimedia. In contrast to these weaknesses, figures regarding illustrated documents, comics and other material are somewhat encouraging.

Question 22: Who produces the textbooks?

- ministry of education: 30 countries (68.18%);
- national publishing houses: 13 countries (29.54%);
- national private publishing houses: 21 countries (47.7%);
- African publishing houses: 13 countries (29.54%);
- non-African publishing houses: 17 countries (38.6%);

One country referred to other sources without providing details.

This is a sensitive field in economic terms which is not to be neglected; the share of the State is 68%, national publishing houses account for less than 30%, the same rate as African publishing houses. National private publishing houses at 22.1% overtake public national publishing houses at more than 47% whereas non-African

publishing houses at 38.6% overtake African publishing houses at 29.54%. The share of non-African publishing houses would appear to be still quite high.

Question 23: How is the distribution of these textbooks ensured?

It is the responsibility of three networks:

- public sector: 63.6%;
- private sector: 34%;
- mixed sector: 25%.

As in question 22, the issue here is one of political as well as economic influence. In this instance, the State's share remains dominant but the private sector at 26.8% is hardly deprived.

Question 24: Acquisition of textbooks by pupils

Four procedures enable students and their families to acquire textbooks:

- given free of charge:
 - primary: 22 countries (50%);
 - lower secondary: 5 countries (11.36%);
 - higher secondary: 9 countries (20.45%);
- lent:
 - primary: 10 countries (22.7%);
 - lower secondary: 7 countries (15.9%);
 - higher secondary: 6 countries (13.6%);
- rented:
 - primary: 1 country (2.27%);
 - lower secondary: 3 countries (6.8%);
 - higher secondary: 2 countries (4.54%);
- purchased by pupils:
 - primary: 17 countries (38.6%);
 - lower secondary: 25 countries (56.8%);
 - higher secondary: 25 countries (56.8%).

The cost of books remains variable between primary education (50%), lower secondary (11%) and higher secondary (20%). In all three cases, the situation extends from inadequacy to catastrophe. Loans do no better: slightly more than 22% in primary education, 15.9% in lower secondary and 13.6% in higher secondary. The renting of books is not at all popular and amounts to 2% in primary, 6.8% in lower secondary and 4% in higher secondary. The purchase of textbooks effects more than 38% of pupils and their parents in primary, 56.8% in lower secondary and higher secondary.

Evidence points to the fact that most students have to pay for their textbooks. Children from low-income families are likely, in the circumstances, to be left by the wayside. A sense of fairness and justice should lead States to ensure better management of this issue as textbooks, while being indispensable in the classroom, provide a practical continuity between classes and out-of-school activities, while being constantly at the learners' disposal.

Chapter V: Teacher Training

Question 25: What is the minimum degree required to undergo history/related subject teacher training?

Figures to be included here.

44 responses were provided (100%), although three countries did not answer the questions (6.8%). It can be observed that all the countries concerned wish to impose a diploma for each level and/or cycle. National specificities often linked to the colonial past do not provide any distinguishing factors. Plans have to be made for a vast system for validating diplomas in order to harmonize skills: a major task and project for our States.

Question 26: How are history/related subject teachers trained?

- via a training school/university:
 - primary: 38 countries (86.36%);
 - lower secondary: 38 countries (86.36%);
 - higher secondary: 36 countries (81.8%);
- via a system of ongoing training:
 - primary: 29 countries (65.9%);
 - lower secondary: 22 countries (50%);
 - higher secondary: 22 countries (50%);
- via a system of self-training:
 - primary: 4 countries (9.09%);
 - lower secondary: 7 countries (15.9%);
 - higher secondary: 5 countries (11.36%);

Teacher training is of vital importance. The competence and capacity of teachers to cope with the new issues of modern education will depend on the standard of training centres.

Evidence points to a distinct awareness of the importance of this matter in the African education system. By combining the training provided by teacher training schools and ongoing training, we have been able to reach very encouraging rates: 89.5% in primary and lower secondary and 92% in higher secondary.

Chapter VI: Plan for the Review of History Curricula and Textbooks

Question 27: Are curricula and textbooks revised/updated on a regular basis?

- yes: 38 (86.4%);
- no: 5 (11.6%);
- no response: 1 (2.3%).

Regularity: responses received: 38

- 5 years: 18 (47.4%);
- 10 years: 9 (23.7%);
- without regularity: 8 (21.1%);
- no response: 3 (7.9%).

As regards regularity, the overall data are satisfactory in view of the extent of problems upstream of the production of textbooks and curricula. The absence of responses from certain countries raises problems which distort the accuracy of global appreciations. Nevertheless, it should be possible to arrive at a regular interval of updating between 5 and 10 years. We have recorded preoccupying situations where updating of material is referred to as "very lengthy updating" or "current curricula in secondary education date back to 1991", some 19 years ago! and one last instance where curricula date back to 1989, some 21 years ago!!!

Question 28: *Is there any plan to revise/update history/related subject curricula and/or textbooks in the near future?*

- yes: 37 (84.1%);
- no: 5 (11.4%);
- no response: 2 (4.5%).

This is where good intentions abound. The reflex to plan updating procedures is certainly interesting, a situation illustrated by the high rate of 84.1%. Negative responses and the absence of responses are always distressing. As for the previous question, this matter deserves constantly to be kept in mind by those in charge.

Chapter VII: Questions of Personal Assessment

Question 29: *In general, what is your assessment of the history curriculum in primary and secondary schools?*

As presented in the "Formula for the analysis of responses", all four questions in this chapter do not require any special treatment. On the whole, all the responses to this question reveal a positive assessment of the history teaching curricula, with, however, reservations as to any gaps therein or corrections to be made.

Question 30: *In your opinion, how could the African history teaching curriculum be improved, if at all, in primary and secondary schools ?*

In this instance, every country has its own recipe according to its specific environment: textbooks in adequate numbers, improved teacher training, more efficient pedagogical tools, and seminars providing opportunities to meet teachers from other countries, etc. Further details are available in the annex to the analysis of the questionnaire.

Questions 31 and 32: these two questions refer to:

- the relevance and production of a common curriculum for all African countries for African history teaching in primary and secondary education;
- the relevance of using the GHA to achieve that objective.

The vast majority of responses to these two questions are positive and reveal coherence and relevance. Further details are available in the annex to the analysis of the questionnaire.

Conclusions and general recommendations

The path we chose was an epistemological approach applied to the education sciences (pedagogy and didactics) and more particularly to history, without any claim to being comprehensive. What light could be shed on the education system in Africa? What prospects should be promoted for the future in the drive towards improvement and progress which underpins the commitment to contribute to establishing a reference?

Studying our past and attempting to become familiar with it and to understand it, the basic vocation of history, does not consist in limiting the past to ideological contingencies for immediate local consumption and severing it from sociological reality. History teaching should play the card of continuity, the selective transmission of knowledge and skills between yesterday and tomorrow. We have no right to forget that what is present will already be past a moment later. We must bear in mind that what is referred to as "tradition" in regard to our societies is a permanent, continuous lesson that our memory gives us and is an integral part of the exchanges between past and present, between ourselves and others.

This brings to light the most important challenge to be faced by UNESCO, the African Union, education specialists and every one of us: on the one hand, the promotion of the *General History of Africa* together with its pedagogical use, but also the promotion of other similar works which UNESCO has helped to draft and which have ties with Africa, namely the *History of Humanity*, the *General History of Latin America*, the *General History of the Caribbean* and *Various Aspects of the Islamic Culture*; and, on the other hand, the launching of a contribution to renovating African history teaching in the African countries, to contribute to the process of regional integration so vigorously recommended by the African Union. This task quite simply involves contributing to develop a global awareness of the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity by highlighting the very spirit and specificity of the populations as well as the destiny, common heritage and values shared by the populations of the different regions.

In this last section of the report, it would not seem futile to reflect on the problems of linguistic frontiers which sometimes separate rather than bring people together. We accept that history through colonization has fashioned us differently. The time has now come to ensure that the language barriers are no longer insurmountable, both in terms of expression, behaviours and ideas. What springs to mind is the experiment attempted and successfully conducted by a group of countries which, overcoming geographical contingencies which were not necessarily favourable, have forced history to guide them in their management of the present and their faith in the future. In the context of a study on the major themes dealt with in general history teaching, they established what we believe should serve as an example: a theme combining social, political and economic issues with a view to encouraging their mutual development. This is known as "BOLESWA" (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland). Admittedly, these three countries do not have a language barrier. By drawing inspiration from their achievement, we believe that States, whether neighbouring or not, with different languages (French, English, Portuguese, Spanish and Arabic)

should attempt this experiment in the form of regional integration of a new kind. This would be the first step in a movement of solidarity aimed at accompanying the process of their development.

How to overhaul an education system which is defective because it is committed to reproducing what was set up a long time ago in the days of colonization? How can the foundations be laid for an enhancing, original and above all equitable modernity in which the student, as a potential citizen, would be at the very heart of educational projects? It means launching a process which fosters open-mindedness, a sense of solidarity, of responsibility and of secularity, all keys to an attainable development, based on the universal values that are drawn from the very best of our traditions?

In more practical terms, how is the role of the *General History of Africa* perceived in this venture to renovate the education system in Africa? The responses we have received are by no means equivocal. As to the need for a curriculum common to all African countries for the teaching of African history at primary and secondary levels and on the relevance of this UNESCO collection. More than 80% of the African countries responded to this question with a massive "yes" vote.

Nevertheless, this massive positive vote warrants reservations. The relevance and feasibility of the venture cannot justify a mechanical approach. A dual attitude, namely adoption and adaptation, is called for in order to take account of the sub-regional and national specificities, without bringing into question the very essence of the project which is to teach African children, separated by so many largely artificial frontiers, a global vision, a pan-African perspective of African history.

Phase II of the project will therefore have to pursue its path with dignity and assurance against the rough and ready apologies and manifestations of narrow-minded nationalism. Furthermore, a number of demands will have to be taken into account to detect in the curricula of each country those themes related to African history. This would allow a more accurate appreciation of what the States require in this regard. Subsequently, concertation and coordination sessions between African countries will have to be organized in order to define jointly those themes considered as fundamental to the teaching of African history, the basis of a common curriculum. In this field, in particular, there is a need to "think Africa, act Africa", an elementary form of decolonization of minds and mentalities.

Lastly, to contribute more to bringing African education systems together, it would not be premature to plan for the recognition of diplomas through equivalence and the validation of courses and diplomas, in order to ensure an enrichment of the common intellectual heritage. A vast movement of teachers trained in the African international centres should be envisaged and thereby become the illustration of a profound revolution that we all earnestly hope for. This would be no more and no less than the judicious use of South-South cooperation/integration in the interest of education on the continent as a whole.