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Revisiting the Complementarity between Education and Inclusive Economies: Education for Prosperity

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Abstract:

This research paper reviews an account of inclusive education (IE) with a special focus on ex-inmates for the purpose of orienting and ensuring they prosper in society. Debate continues on how education is a panacea to economic growth and development. This paper is a desk-top review that discusses prison education and reflects on whether inclusive education helps ex-inmates upon release. It considers the extent to which education in prison may help ex-inmates have employment prospects and contribute to household productivity. The paper argues for a clear emphasis that education is a critical tool in the rehabilitative process and thus in the prison context it contributes to the wider literature of inclusive education. Education addresses the barriers to participation faced by members of marginalized groups and thus propelling inclusive economies.

Keywords: *Economic growth, prison education, inclusive economies, social inequalities, marginalized group*

1. Introduction

Schooling may have numerous consequences for individuals and society. For many people, there is some consumption value from the educational process. Human beings are curious creatures and enjoy learning and acquiring new knowledge. Even focusing on the investment aspects, education may enable people to more fully enjoy life, appreciate literature and culture, and be more informed and socially-involved citizens. Although these and other potential consequences of schooling are important and should not be ignored, the consequences of education for employability, productivity, and earnings are also of substantial importance.

Many individuals invest in education in the belief that doing so will yield future benefits such as greater employment opportunities, higher earnings and more interesting and varied careers. Similarly, many public policies encourage individual citizens to increase their educational attainment and enhance their skills and knowledge. Increased educational attainment and skills are not necessarily valued for their own sake but often because they are believed to result in better labour market and social outcomes. Corrective services departments throughout the world have introduced education and training programs in their prisons, and use course completions and reduced measures of success (Nally, Lockwood, Knutson, & Ho, 2012).

Prison education is widely recognized as playing a central role in the successful reintegration of prisoners into wider community. The acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies ought to assist the offender in making life-enhancing improvements that aim to reduce the offender's chances of recidivism and help re-integrate him back to society. Education does not only improve the individual choice available to men, but that the educated population provides the type of labour force necessary for industrial development and economic growth (Schultz, 1982).

Education is known as a great equalizer and this is idealized that the prisoners are less educated than the general population outside the prison. This is evidenced by a study by the Department of Correctional facilities (DOC) 1992-2002 that confirms an average of 50% of all inmates do not have a KCSE certificate and about 75% have no vocational or collegiate education. Jane Harlow, 2003, opines that about 40% of state and federal prisoners lack a higher diploma compared to the general population which is an inequality. This gives those in these correctional facilities the opportunity to bridge the gap while in prisons and this is achieved through establishment of educational programmes within the walls of the correctional facilities.

A person with education benefits not only himself but also the society. The provision of education to a population is found to increase the economic growth of a nation and that kind of education must be cost effective to both the individual and society. According to Kim and Clark (2013), educating the prisoners will lead to reduced recidivism. Prison education is mainly given to the prisoners to enable them acquire skills and find meaningful employment which is long term (Rhode, 2004). Ex-convicts with education acquired while in prison have high chances to acquire job opportunities in the society compared to their counterparts who did not receive any training while in prisons.

However, it is the role of prison education to ensure they equip the prisoners with sufficient values while in there so that the individual can fit upon return to the society they once lived. Moreover, to help them know how to live better with the people they once offended. The individual in this case should live prison as a more law-abiding citizen in order to be able to be re-absorbed into the society once more. Failure to which, it underscores that the societal costs are likely to be exacerbated.

Education is a cost-effective intervention that puts prisoners on a different path that generates hope and employability. We can decrease the costs of prisons to taxpayers either by reducing the number of people entering the system or reducing the number of people returning to it.

2. Statement of the Problem

Prisoners do not incur any direct cost such as out of pocket outlays to pay for items such as books and school fees. All these costs are borne by the government. Majority of costs are shared at societal level and this has resulted to society being much less sanguine about the need to educate inmates. Ex-prisoners still re-offend and commit a crime so that they are locked up. This has casted doubt on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes such as prison education. When prisoners are released from custody and the control of correctional institutions into the outside world, there tends to be repulsion from society at large due to re-entry challenges such as a place to live and getting employed. This makes prisoners susceptible to committing same crime and get re-arrested. This means that there exist glaring gaps in the need for prison education since education is meant to improve their employability and to change their personal attitudes and perceptions. Disturbingly often offenders are released with little hope for re-integration. They will go back to their communities' time warped, many unskilled and un-educated. A visceral reaction will be that locking up of ex-prisoners becomes impossibly expensive and in not helping them be successful upon release we are not helping our communities. How confident can we be that higher educational attainment and enhanced skills development deserve to be treated as objectives, if what we really care about are labour market and social outcomes?

3. Objectives

This research paper will be guided by the following objectives:

- To establish if prison education helps ex-inmates' re-integrate into their communities.
- To establish whether prison education helps ex-inmates obtain employment.
- To establish the extent to which ex-inmates contribute to household productivity.

4. Research Questions

This research paper seeks to answer the following questions:

- Does prison education have capacity to form as stepping stone towards ex-prisoners' inclusion into society?
- Does prison education help ex-inmates obtain employment?
- Do ex-inmates contribute to household productivity?

5. Theoretical Framework

This research will be supported by the Screening Hypothesis theory that was developed by Michael Spence in 1973. This theory has helped explain works on information flows and market development. Spence argues that schooling is simply used as a screening device. Employers use educational attainment and possession of credentials for job placements and thereby earnings. This theory contends with the assertion that prisoners with a clear intention of re-entering the labour market as soon as they finish their sentence, they will use prison education to improve their market potentials.

The screening hypothesis theory is significant in that, education to merely be a signal to employers', it does not primarily alter the labour market productivity but instead grade and label people. Ideally the assertions of this theory will be true since some studies that have examined the employability of prisoners have concluded that, a lack of stability in people's private lives can affect employment stability and re-entry into the labour market.

Periods of incarceration and homelessness send signals to employers and this can diminish employment prospects for ex-prisoners. In a 2001 survey of employers' preferences regarding job applicants with criminal histories, Holzer et al. 2002 found that employer's willingness to hire ex-prisoners is quite limited. This theory formed an important theoretical base of this research paper because it justifies the need for provision of prison education because it is used as a basis for sorting workers. The theory strongly asserts that any education system must identify pre-existing characteristics that enhance the quality of graduates.

Certification and qualification such as college degree signals trainability, competence and becomes ticket for higher paying jobs. In the absence of background checks, returning to the labour market with a gap in their employment record signals a decay of human capital, (Singley 2004). This can be compounded by ex-prisoners being less skilled and less attuned to the social cues that may arise from interviews.

This theory would anchor this study by annulling the pre-disposition that ex-prisoners will have adverse ramifications for labour market participation and social inclusion. It would be disappointing to see the inroads made by prisoners towards access to prison education being eroded by labeling on the purge of criminality. Screening ought to have no effect on internal rate of return for individual workers hence an implication that obtaining a higher educational level means one has a greater potential to find employment and attain higher wages.

The chances for prisoners to make an informed choice on undertaking prison education should not be hampered by mere labeling as advanced by this theory. Thus, although the actions and crimes committed by prisoners is not a panacea to all isolation and exclusion, education and training in prison plays a key role in improving the employability of prisoners and their successful re-integration in society.

People with criminal records find difficulties or inability in finding educational opportunities and were often denied financial aid based on their records. In America, even those found guilty of minor misdemeanor (RRS,2011). Nevertheless, in view of the screening hypothesis theory education is likely to spur agitation in an individual to seek admission to a given level of study. However, it is critical to note that joining a particular educational program is contingent upon prior attendance at the previous level. This is arguably so because from a social perspective, the screening hypothesis is important in the context that education will merely signal an employer that certain workers are above average in terms of intelligence, motivation and self-discipline. At a glance, the theory will help prison education be seen as a maiden step towards reformation in the thinking of society that prisoners are social misfits but rather people of great value in the community. The essence of such will be a considerate conscious screening of inmates and the most subtle and inconspicuous ladder to advancement by prisoners and this will likely encourage specific capital formation.

6. Review of Literature

6.1. Prison Education in Kenya

Prisons are an integral part of the criminal justice system of a country. There are various types of prisons such as those exclusively for adults, those for children, females, convicted prisoners, under-trial detainees, and separate facilities for mentally ill offenders (Suresh et al., 2011). The primary purpose of imprisonment is to protect society against crime and retribution. Punitive methods of treatment of prisoner's alone are neither relevant nor desirable to achieve the goal of reformation and rehabilitation of prison inmates. According to Karnataka Prisons (2009), the concept of correction, reformation or rehabilitation has come to the foreground and the prison administration is now expected to function in a curative and correctional manner. It is under this backdrop that prison education was introduced as a rehabilitative role.

According to Francisco, 2008 he asserts that the provision of education for persons in detention is inherently complex and, where it does take place, it does so in an environment inherently hostile to its liberating potential. The challenge with prison education is to create an environment for those who are detained that enables positive change and human capacity that would help ex-inmates acquire skills, knowledge and competencies to be able to fit and adjust in society. The provision of accessible, available, adaptable and acceptable education is one vital element in this environment (Francisco,2008).

Prisoners find themselves stigmatized upon their release after being subjected to the dehumanization of incarceration. Society still remains adamant to welcome ex-inmates. They believe once a criminal always a criminal. This contends with Sobanet,2008 proposition that; to tell a story of a prison sentence is therefore tantamount to telling the tale of a person exposed to a universe with distinct risks, humiliations, values and rules and regulations.

Education as a rehabilitation tool is a source of refinement for prisoners and should be emphasized. Due to the much time prisoners have in prison; prison education makes that time meaningful. Ex-inmates engaged in education, have chances of refining their language, a clearer mode of association and impact of knowledge that transforms the prisoner wholly.

To clarify the content of the right to education in places of detention, we need to make clear what it is we are trying to accomplish (Francisco, 2008). He also argues that, the obvious goal is to empower struggling people in a way that allows them to become major contributors to the health, growth and development of our global community. This recognition of the power in education in places of detention as a change instrument can improve the prison condition and uphold the dignity of those in prison. It empowers prisoners with skills, increase their chances for employment and prepare prisoner for re-entry back to the society.

6.2. Ex-Inmates Employment Prospects

Employment is only one element of social rehabilitation. The main purpose of requiring prisoners to work whilst in prison is to prepare them for a normal working life on their release, not to make money for the prison administration or to run factories for the benefit of other parts of government. Coyle 2000 posits that a full response will require opportunities to develop all skills needed to return to society; differing societies will require differing skills.

Fine et al, 2001 asserts that each inmate should be provided with a program of education which seems most likely to further the process of socialization and rehabilitation. Education has been entrenched within correctional institutions with the introduction of indeterminate sentences, which required evidence of self-improvement as a condition of release.

Educational instruction proliferated, eventually including high school courses and general equivalency diploma (GED) preparation, vocational training in specific trades, life skills programs, academic higher education program, and study release (Coley and Barton,2006).

Education can be more effective if it is combined with work, treatment programs, and other approved activities (Gaes,2008). Gaes goes ahead to assert that the opportunity prisoners are offered to learn social, vocational and academic skills earns them an opportunity to work in job assignments outside the prison gates.

According to Sunday Nation, 28 April of 2013 it aired a story of Joseph Mwangi who after sitting a directorate of industrial training examination while in prison, upon release he used his carpentry skill to make furniture for sale. Nally et al. 2012 linked the attainment of skills through in-prison study directly to employability. This is augmented by Anders and

Noblit (2011) who also argued that there is an indirect link between in-prison study and reduced opportunities for infractions (misbehavior inside prison), which can jeopardize early release and opportunities for employment.

The international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 8, states that, no one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour. The basic Principles for the treatment of prisoners, principle 8, states that, conditions shall be created to enable prisoners to undertake meaningful remunerated employment which will facilitate their integration into the country's labour market and permit them to contribute to their own financial support and to that of their families.

Bracken (2011) affirms, prison can provide a stable environment in which prisoners develop the skills that will enable them to follow a life in employment and out of crime. It is worthy to note that, ex-inmates can compete for work or engage in self-employment activities. This helps in reintegration into society.

6.3. Ex-Inmates Contribution to Household Productivity.

Education in prison is a first real opportunity for prisoners to address this deficiency and enhance their productivity in society. The universal Declaration of Human Right, article 26, emphasizes the importance of education for all irrespective of their condition in life. The international Covenant on civil and political Rights, Article 10, emphasizes the importance of providing a full programme of constructive activities aimed at improving the opportunity for prisoners to access employment after release in order to earn a living to be able to support themselves and their families.

According to Coyle, 2000 he asserts that finding a way of earning a living is one of the most important elements of a prisoner's ability to reintegrate into society on release from prison. For many prisoners their time in prison may be the first opportunity to develop vocational skills and to do regular work. According to the standard, 2014 a story of Aaron Nduku, a preacher and carpenter who served a 14 years term is a transformed father of five who was welcomed by the entire community after rehabilitation. Nduku argues that most people indulge in criminal activities due to illiteracy and lack of employment.

The acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills by prison inmates could help re-unite with their families and engage in useful socio-economic activities to earn a decent living and be able to provide for their families. Successful prisoner reentry at the family unit will be measured by ability to afford and readily access basic human wants such as food, shelter and clothing.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The strong positive relationship between education and earnings is one of the most well-established relationships in social science. Many social scientists have, however, been reluctant to interpret this correlation as evidence that education exerts a causal effect on earnings.

According to human capital theory, schooling raises earnings because it enhances workers' skills, thus making employees more productive and more valuable to employers. However, as discussed previously, the positive relationship between earnings and schooling could arise because both education and earnings are correlated with unobserved factors such as ability, perseverance, and ambition (hereafter simply referred to as "ability"). If there are systematic differences between the less educated and the well-educated that affect both schooling decisions and labour market success, then the correlation between education and earnings may reflect these other factors as well.

According to signaling/screening theory, such differences could arise if employers use education as a signal of unobserved productivity-related factors such as ability or perseverance. In these circumstances, standard estimates of the return to schooling are likely to be biased upwards because they do not take into account unobserved "ability". More generally, those with greater ability or motivation may be more likely to be successful, even in the absence of additional education. That is, the correlation that exists between earnings and education, after controlling for other observed influences on earnings, may reflect the contribution of unobserved influences rather than a causal impact of education on earnings. Despite the many studies done on the impact of education as an effective rehabilitative tool and its contribution towards smooth transition back to society, more challenges have been faced by the ex-inmates. This is because the link between prison and society is still lacking effective measures such as effective monitoring and support programs, which should be formulated and implemented to prepare inmates effectively back to society.

Education for prisoners has been proved to enhance employment opportunities, boost social cohesion and promote household productivity. This implication has been able to improve societal safety and also provided a soft-landing spot into the community for those who leave prison. Without the skills and knowledge needed to face new employment situations and statuses in the community, individuals will be excluded from the labour market and many will feel cornered for lack of opportunity.

It has also emerged that many international instruments support the importance of education in prison. The prison department must provide prisoners in their care with opportunities to change and develop. The programs inmates undergo are aimed at improving the opportunity for prisoners to access employment after release in order to earn a living, to be able to support themselves and their families. Education in prison is therefore the first real opportunity for prisoners to enhance their productivity in society.

8. Innovation, Knowledge Creation and Economic Growth

Education plays an important role in economic growth (see, for example, Barro, 2001). The education and skill formation systems play an important role in fostering innovation and advancing knowledge. There are three main dimensions to this role. One is related to the research function of educational institutions, particularly universities. Such research can be an important source of new ideas and advances in knowledge. The other dimensions are related to the

teaching function of universities and colleges. These educational institutions train many of the scientists and engineers who will make future discoveries. They also play a central role in the transfer of accumulated knowledge to new generations -- not just in science and engineering but also across a wide range of fields of study.

The human capital of the workforce is thus regarded as a crucial factor facilitating the adoption of new and more productive technologies tertiary education has a special role to play in preparing workers for technological adoption and innovation in the more advanced countries.

9. Focus on Knowledge Spillovers

Static knowledge spillovers arise if more education raises not only the productivity of those receiving the education but also the productivity of those they work with and interact with. Such knowledge spillovers can take place through the exchange of ideas, imitation, and learning-by-doing. Evidence of the role of knowledge spillovers in technological change has resulted in substantial attention being focused on the clustering of the agents of innovation -- firms, end users, universities and government research facilities (Bekar and Lipsey, 2002).

Most recent research indicates moderately large social returns due to knowledge spillovers from post-secondary (college in U.S. or university in Canada) education. For example, Ciccone and Peri (2002) estimate social returns of 2%-8% in excess of private returns. A cautious assessment of this recent literature would be that there are social returns of 1%-2% associated with static knowledge spillovers from post-secondary education in advanced economies. Together with the growth-enhancing dynamic effects, this evidence suggests that social benefits associated with technological adoption, innovation, and productivity enhancement from knowledge spillovers may yield social returns in the range of 2-4%. In these circumstances, the average return from existing investments in education may understate the payoff to incremental investments. That is, policy interventions that focus on increasing education among those with relatively low levels of schooling may be able to achieve rates of return that exceed those experienced by those who would invest in education even in the absence of any intervention.

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