



Philosophies and Perspectives in Education: Examining their Roles and Relevance in Education

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ABSTRACT

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Different philosophies have been used to guide and explain policies and practices in education. Such philosophies include the philosophy of progressivism, and the Marxist philosophy. These are examined in this paper in relation to how they attempt to explain the role of education in society. The paper also examines the idea of developing and promoting an African Philosophy of Education. The paper examines the philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* as a way of advancing the African Philosophy of Education within the Zimbabwean context. An examination of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) was made as a way of attempting to establish the extent to which the curriculum has been guided by any of the philosophies discussed. The paper argues that the different Philosophies of Education should be used as a basis for developing an African Philosophy of Education. As such, the Philosophy of Unhu/Ubuthu should be fully incorporated into the education curriculum.

Keywords:

Progressivism, Philosophy of Education, African Philosophy of Education, Unhu/ubuntu, Early Childhood Development

INTRODUCTION

The paper identifies and discusses different Philosophies of Education. These are discussed in relation to their relevance to the new scientific paradigm in education. Early philosophers such as John Dewey, Jean Jacques Rousseau and their philosophy of progressivism, and the Marxist philosophy of education are used here to bring the discussion into its context. An examination of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) curriculum in Zimbabwe is done to accentuate its role within the context of the African Philosophy of Education. At the same time it is used as a case to measure the extent to which the African Philosophy of Education has been embedded in the new scientific paradigm in education. The philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* is discussed as an example of African Philosophy of Education.

John Dewey and Jean Jacques Rousseau: The Philosophy of Progressivism

John Dewey was one of the major proponents of the philosophy of progressivism. It was established in the 1920s in the United States of America. It notes that the child should be the centre of our planning in education. In order for children to benefit from education it should be related to their needs. According to the philosophy of John Dewey experimentation by children as they learn allows them to try new ideas. The children should be allowed to discover answers to problems through their interaction with the physical and social environment. Such an approach is seen as developing thinking and problem solving skills in children. Progressivism in education is seen as promoting creativity and freedom among children. Children should be able to use the different tools that support their education. It is not the books that determine what children learn, but rather children have the power to decide. Progressivism was guided by Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism and experimentalism. Through these, Dewey came up with four stages that apply to experimentalism. These are identification of a problem, coming up with a hypothesis, experimental testing and inductive argument. It is the child who is involved in all these stages.

According to Darling (1994), progressivism in education emphasizes a number of qualities that are important for the development of the child. These include experimental learning, emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking, group work and development of social skills, education for social responsibility and democracy, accommodating each child's personal goal and placing emphasis on different resources rather than textbooks. According to Dewey knowledge is a social construct and the duty of teachers and society is to help children construct their own learning. The teacher is therefore a member of the community who should assist in the development of the child without being authoritarian. The curriculum should reflect the values of society and these should be continuously developed.

Dewey was therefore concerned with participatory learning. Dewey as cited by Vashishtha et al. (2011) argued that action must precede knowledge and that knowledge is a result of the child's activities with the environment. Furthermore they note that the function of education according to Dewey was to help children grow into happy, moral and efficient human beings.

On the curriculum, Dewey noted that it had to grow out of the child's interests. Vashishtha et al. (2011) identify the main characteristics and principles of the curriculum, which include the need for the curriculum to reflect the social life and social activities. As such, the curriculum should follow progressive organization of knowledge based on the educative experiences and problems of the learner, which should be flexible.

Apart from his concern for the curriculum, Dewey was equally concerned with the role of the teacher, methods of teaching and discipline. Under the philosophy of progressivism, Dewey recommended three methods of teaching. These were learning by doing, learning by integration and learning through productive and creative activities (ibid). The teacher was there to guide the children and discipline would be derived from the activities the children engaged in.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was viewed as the Father of Progressivism. Dewey's ideas on children's education were not as radical as Rousseau's. As noted by Darling (1994:10), Rousseau argued that "the study of the child should be made the foundation on which a sound education is built, and such a study shows that much of the subject matter of conventional education is taught at an inappropriately early age". In that regard, formal teaching has to be delayed until the child is ready. Rousseau identified the main sources of education as nature, men and circumstances. For Rousseau, it is the adults who spoil children through their teachings. As such, he advocates for negative education, where children are guided against evil. In Darling (1994) Rousseau divides the aims of education according to stages of human development. These stages are the infancy, childhood, preadolescent period and adolescent period. At the first two stages of development the emphasis was on development and attainment of freedom. These are the stages that are covered by the Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme in Zimbabwe. On the curriculum, Rousseau believed that it should be related to the age groups referred to above. At 0 to 5 years the curriculum should be concerned with the physical development of the child and the second stage should be concerned with the development of senses. This second group is in the 5 to 12 years age group. The child should be allowed to explore the environment and make discoveries and judgments.

On teaching methods, Rousseau emphasized the need to teach without books, observation, provision of opportunities related to the children's experiences but not books, provision of real objects and sense training. The role of the teacher was not to teach, but rather to

guide the children and create opportunities for them to develop at their own pace. In that regard Rousseau's ideas on teaching and learning concurred with Dewey's.

An analysis of progressivism in the context of the Early Childhood Development programme in Zimbabwe

The philosophy of progressivism as expressed by the two philosophers has influenced the education curriculum in Zimbabwe to some extent. It should be noted that the position taken by Dewey was not as radical as the one by Rousseau. Rousseau's ideas were so radical that he advocated for negative education. Despite that there are elements of progressivism that have been applied in the ECD programme in Zimbabwe today.

The philosophy of progressivism has been found relevant in the education of young children at ECD in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe ECD curriculum uses the child-centred approach. An examination of the ECD syllabus in Zimbabwe shows that some of the aims of the ECD programme are to develop in learners: gross motor skills, fine motor skills, sensory skills and body co-ordination; concepts, generalizations, applications, logic, language, problem solving and thinking skills and psycho-social skills (Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, 2011). These aims relate well to the role of education as advocated by the two philosophers in the early years of child development. At the same time the skills to be developed are clearly stated as physical health practices, physical skills, emotional skills and well-being, social skills, cognitive skills, and technological skills. The ECD syllabus caters for individual differences and individual growth as advocated by the progressivists.

The methods of learning used in the ECD programme in Zimbabwe include discovery learning, experimentation, field trips, song and dance, problem solving, puzzles and group projects. The ECD programme has adopted the philosophy of progressivism in terms of the teaching methods. The methods give the child an opportunity to develop freely. It should be noted that experimentation as a teaching method adopted at ECD is another name for progressivism. It has now been adopted in the teaching of the sciences. The discovery method and experimentation make learning stress free to children at ECD level.

The role of the teacher at ECD level is very much different from the traditional teacher's role. This is very much in line with the role of the teacher as advocated by Dewey and Rousseau. In Zimbabwe children at ECD level learn through play and the teaching is child-centred not teacher centred. The ECD syllabus states the methodology as "the pace of learning will be determined by the individual child's readiness to absorb a concept or master a skill, not by a teacher-centred timetable" (Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, 2011). The role of the teacher is to create a conducive environment for the child to develop through

exploration and experiment. The teaching at this level is characterised by use of real objects and children's activities. The use of punishment as a way of disciplining children is not allowed.

To make teachers aware of their roles at ECD level the government of Zimbabwe has embarked on the training of ECD teachers at teachers colleges. There are also courses at university to develop teachers who are already in the teaching field. This is to equip them with new teaching skills as required at ECD level.

The teacher assists children in the different forms of development which include physical development, psychological development, social development and emotional development. Progressivism in education reminds us that whatever we do should be child centred. Children at ECD are actively involved in their learning. They determine their activities to a large extent, and the role of the teacher is to offer guidance. Progressivism, when applied at ECD allows children to explore the environment and make discoveries.

Limitations of Progressivism

Whilst the child-centred approach to learning as advocated by progressivism, has a number of advantages when dealing with young children at ECD level, it has its own limitations. Children need to learn in a disciplined environment. Allowing children to engage in activities at their own pace and at will may create disorder. The ECD programme has a curriculum that has to be completed within a specified time. Focusing on the approaches as advocated by progressivism may be time consuming. The project method of teaching may be limited to specific subjects and may require more resources than ordinary approaches. It demands hard work and commitment on the part of the teacher and the extent to which children can explore and discover is limited if the teacher is not committed. In most public schools the number of children per ECD class exceeds the recommended. This makes it difficult for the ECD teacher to plan for individual children as expected.

The role and purpose of education

How we define the role of education in society is to a large extent influenced by the philosophy and perspectives we choose to define our education and the activities that support such education. The functionalist perspective for example defines the role of education in terms of the contribution that it has to make to maintain value consensus and social solidarity (Haralambos, 1986). In that regard, education within the functionalist perspective is tasked with the responsibility of inculcating norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs within society. Such responsibilities cannot be left to the teacher in a school set up. These are attributes that have to be learned right from birth. As such, the family has a major role in the education of children. The school is therefore seen as an extension of the family effort.

The individual should be able to acquire skills that are relevant to society through education.

The lack of relevance in our education system has contributed to our producing well 'schooled' products that are not educated. These are individuals that have reached the highest level of education in terms of paper qualification, but have no contribution to make in their society. They lack skills, attitudes, values and norms that contribute to the development of society.

If we were to define the role of education within the context of the interactionist perspective our focus would be on interpreting and understanding meanings. Haralambos (1986: 208) notes that the individual constructs his/her social reality and this reality is not imposed by societal demands as a result "meanings are constructed by actors in the process of interaction rather being imposed by an external social system. They are created, developed, modified and changed in the process of negotiating". The arguments by the interactionist perspective are that the instruments that we use to measure attainment in education may be flawed. The interactionist perspective questions the role of the teacher in the classroom as stereotype. The meanings and labels they impose on learners may not necessarily be what they are. Their focus should be on the acts rather than the individual.

The Marxist theory and the role and purpose of education

The Marxist theory is based on the ideas of Karl Marx, a German sociologist. There are many other sociologists who supported or expanded Marx's ideas. Karl Marx sought to explain how society works. He explained society in terms of the economic contradictions and conflicts that were a result of an imbalance between classes within society. According to Marx the major sources of conflict was capitalism. The Marxist theory falls under macro theories. It looks at the broader society; and it's also known as the conflict theory, as it attempts to explain processes in society in terms of conflict.

Within the context of the Marxist sociologists, education in its present state is seen as a continuation of the oppressive nature of capitalism. They see education playing the role of maintaining the class structure. It maintains the classes of the ruling class and the working class. As a result, Marxist sociologists are of the view that the curriculum and the education system focus on the values that favour the ruling class.

They also see the curriculum as unfair. Education is accused of being responsible for maintaining the status quo. Marxist sociologists argue that the skills acquired through education may not be relevant to the individual and society. They argue that education in its present form makes the subject class submit to ruling class ideology. Education in this case is found important in order to produce behavior that makes it possible for the majority of the subject class to fit into

the lowest levels of the division of labour. As noted by Althusser cited by Haralambos (1986:180);

Education not only transmits a general ruling class ideology which justifies and legitimates the capitalist system; it produces the attitudes and behavior required by the major groups in the division of labour. It teaches workers to accept and submit to their exploitation, it teaches the 'agents of exploitation and repression', the managers, administrators and politicians, how to practice their crafts and rule the work-force as agents of the ruling class.

The quotation above raises a number of key issues about how the Marxists view the role of education in society. It demonstrates the economic class struggles that they say are common in a capitalist state. For the Marxist the only way to improve the education is by getting rid of capitalism and replacing it with socialism and then communism. They see both ideologies replacing capitalism and the working class taking control of such institutions as education.

Within the Marxist perspective education is seen as producing workers for the capitalist system. It is able to provide workers that serve the system. As a result, the curriculum is seen as producing students who are obedient and subordinate as these are emphasized at school. Another view held by Marxist sociologists such as Bowles and Gintis is that whilst the curriculum is important, the hidden curriculum catered for students much more than the planned curriculum (Haralambos, 1986).

The Marxist view is that education is seen as promoting social inequalities. This is as a result of the grading system that exists in schools. Whilst sociologists may differ on the areas of focus in the socialization role of education, they seem to agree that education has a socialization function. Whilst the Marxist perspective views the present education system as unfair, it acknowledges that the curriculum socializes pupils to accept the roles that are assigned to them by society. Furthermore, pupils learn to work and share with others. At school this can be done through group work. Group work may include tasks that children do in competition and those they do as a team. The Marxist perspective has a bone of contention with the values children are being socialized into.

Apart from the socialization role, education performs a cultural function. Ezewu (1990) argues that education by its nature is a cultural process. He further notes that the basic aim of education should be the transmission of cultural heritage, preparation for adulthood and fitting into the community. Such a role for education has wide implications for teachers. This means that when dealing with children in Early Childhood Development (E.C.D) classes, the teacher has to be aware of the culture of the community. This will

help the teacher when he/she plans activities for the class. The teacher should be able to make use of the local environment, which is part of their culture for children to understand and develop concepts. Such environment includes the language that the teacher uses, since language is part of our culture.

Other roles of education include political role and economic role. Education may be used as an oppressive tool. Much depends on the nature of the curriculum. The Marxist view as noted earlier sees the education system as promoting capitalism. They find capitalism unfair. For the Marxists, the oppressed have very little chance of rising through education. In that regard, the education system if not revised might disempower the working class.

The relevance of the Marxist perspective to education

The major differences on the role of education to society appear to be between the functionalists and the Marxists. The Marxist view appears to be extreme in its attempt to explain issues in society. It tends to explain things within the context of economic conflict between two classes. Despite this view, the arguments by Marxist sociologists have been found to quite relevant when it comes to education. The Marxist perspective on the role and purpose of education reminds us of the problems that are found in society, and are associated with struggles within these classes. It also shows us the limitations of education to address these problems. The education system has at times maintained these classes. For example, in Zimbabwe we still have school classified according to where they are found. Some offer different curricula from government schools. Another important point about the Marxist view is that it places emphasis on action in order to correct past imbalances. The perspective also reminds us to challenge the status quo so as to bring about change in education. It forms the basis for curriculum innovation. The Marxist view promotes curriculum development to align it with the needs of society. It also reminds of the need to revise the curriculum to make it relevant to society. It recognizes the importance of the student.

Furthermore, it has an effect on how we plan our education. It reminds us that if education is to be relevant it has to empower the individual right from the earliest level of development. Children have to be socialized using a curriculum that caters for societal needs.

The limitations of the Marxist perspective

The Marxist perspective tends to dwell on economic relationship which may not be necessary in education. In fact, education has been able to cut across economic boundaries. The perspective does not show any flexibility when it comes to explaining problems in education. It does not recognize the important role that education in its present state has been able to remove

classes based on gender, race and religion. It tends to extend political theorization to education, ignoring the reality on the ground. The focus on conflict might be misleading, as it is not always conflict that brings about change in education. Conflict may at times work against the goals of education.

The Philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu*: An attempt to develop an African Philosophy of Education

The philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* is one of the African Philosophies. The terms *unhu/ubuntu* when literally translated into English, they mean the "humanness" that we find the person. In the Shona and Ndebele languages, these are the common languages spoken in Zimbabwe; *unhu/ubuntu* refers to a person. When we say so and so is a "person" in this case we are referring to behaviour, moral attributes, upright values and attitudes. The philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* has its origins from the work of Samkange and Samkange (1980) who made a contribution by coming up with a philosophy that intended to promote indigenous perceptions and views. For Samkange and Samkange (1980) *unhuism/ubuntuism* inspires, permeates, and radiates high mental and moral attributes. *Unhu/Ubuntu* promotes brotherliness, togetherness, sharing, caring for one another, kindness, courtesy and good relations. The philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* stresses the values of respect, consideration for others and the sacrosanct nature of human life.

Unhu/Ubuntu philosophy is used to define "educatedness", according to the Shona and Ndebele societies in Zimbabwe. Within the context of this philosophy, education should guide you in terms of what can be said or not said in public, to elders and peers. When one lacks these values he/she is viewed as not educated, according to the philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu*. Such a person is said to be lacking in *unhu/ubuntu*, therefore uneducated. If he/she has been to school and is found lacking in these virtues such an individual can be described as schooled, but not educated.

Furthermore, the philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu* is collectivist in approach. It therefore appears to contradict the euro-centric approach to life and education which is individualistic. As a result of this disconnection between the two, the educated African in Zimbabwe may be in a dilemma. He/She is educated to the Euro-centric value system which may be quite the opposite of societal expectations.

If the education curriculum is to promote *unhu/ubuntu* it has to incorporate the major features of *unhu/ubuntu*. According to Samkange and Samkange (1980) the major features of the philosophy are embedded in the following: producing products that fit into a well-organized social and political system, developing social cohesion and human relations. Furthermore, the individual should be socialized to accept that he/she is part of society and has to understand it and make a contribution to its well-being. In this regard the *unhu/ubuntu* philosophy shares its

expectations with the functionalist perspective, which is equally concerned with education for social cohesion.

Samkange and Samkange (1980) further noted that the philosophy of unhu/ubuntu is characterized by at least three major features. They note that such characteristics include sharing, respect, preservation of human life, and societal needs taking precedence over individual needs. It has the following key values at its centre among others already noted: togetherness; sympathy; empathy and tolerance.

The role of philosophy in early childhood development (ECD) education in Zimbabwe

Education in Zimbabwe can be classified into four categories or phases. The first phase is the primary school. Primary school is now nine years. However, before the introduction of the Early Childhood Development (E C D) , it was seven years. Following the recommendations of the Nziramasanga Commission, (1999) into Education and Training, two ECD classes were introduced. These are ECD-A and ECD-B for 3–4 year olds and 4-6 year olds respectively. The Nziramasanga Commission was mandated to identify training needs, skills development needs in Zimbabwe and to review the philosophy guiding Zimbabwean education system. The establishment of the Commission and its terms of reference gave Zimbabwe the opportunity to come up with an African Philosophy of Education as the Commission had the opportunity to source people's views. Coming up with an African philosophy of education goes beyond just introducing new programmes in the curriculum. Whilst we acknowledge the role of the curriculum in changing the mind-set, curriculum change alone cannot promote the concept of an African Philosophy of Education. The promotion of the African Philosophy of Education entails moving away from the Euro-centric approach to defining an educated African to a more Afro-centric approach to defining an educated African. Questions may be raised as to how this can come about if there is no curriculum reform from primary school level to tertiary level. We still have a curriculum that is Eurocentric in every respect. Cases in point are the following:

- For one to train as a teacher in Zimbabwe one is required to have a minimum of 5 O' level subjects including English and Mathematics. One cannot train to be a teacher if he/she has Advanced level subjects but has no English Language at O'level, even if he/she intends to take courses that are not related to English Language such as Science, Shona, Ndebele, Mathematics, and Engineering among others. The essence of such a demand is not clear. It should be noted that each subject area has its own language jargon and register and the demand for a specific language cannot be academically justified. There is need to Africanise and indigenise our Education system

within the context of the African Philosophy of Education.

- The language of instruction in schools remains English
- Public examinations for all other subjects, (except Shona and Ndebele subjects) are in English.
- Our definition of an educated African is Eurocentric, as it is about one who finds it easier to fit into the Western World than his/her own community.

The Director's Circular No. 48 of 2007 makes reference to the implementation of early childhood development education programme in schools and centres. In the preamble the circular states that "In an effort to democratise the Early Childhood Development (ECD) education programme as recommended by the 1999 Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture has incorporated the two year ECD programme into the normal formal education system". Among other things the circular stipulated the role of the primary school head, registration of ECD centres, curriculum and activities at ECD centres. On curriculum and activities of an ECD centre the circular stated that "The curriculum at an ECD centre shall not include instruction in formal reading, writing or number work nor in any other activity which is more properly a part of the curriculum of a school. All learning should be done through play".

The second phase is the secondary school which is six years, thus from form 1 up to form 6. The third and final phase in the education system in Zimbabwe is the tertiary phase. This falls under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education.

It would be a mammoth task to analyze the application of any of the philosophies referred above. As such, the paper focuses on the ECD level. The focus is on the extent to which the philosophies enunciated above have been adopted in the education curriculum in Zimbabwe at ECD level. This is done through the analysis of the curriculum and syllabus at ECD level.

In its preamble, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Syllabus by the Curriculum Development Unit (C.D.U), (2011) state that " The ECD syllabus covers a two year programme catering for children in the 3 to 5 year age group, including learners with special educational needs. It focuses on the development of the child, encompassing physical, social, moral, cognitive, creative and emotional development". A further review of the skills to be developed shows that at ECD level the focus is on developing at least six basic skills in the children. These are physical health practices, physical skills, emotional skills and well-being, social skills, cognitive skills and technological skills (C.D.U, 2011). In order to develop these skills children had to cover five curriculum areas which are Expressive Arts, Language Arts, Mathematics and Science, Social Sciences and Technology. Such learning would take place through discovery, problem solving,

experimentation, discussion, word games, quizzes, storytelling, song and dance, poems and rhymes, role play and drama, field trips among others. The syllabus also states the methodology of learning to be used. Children are expected to learn through play, use of a child-centred approach to learning and that the role of the teacher was that of providing a stimulating environment.

From the curriculum and syllabus at ECD, there are a number of observations that can be made in relation to the philosophies of education already referred to above. It can be noted that the ECD programme in Zimbabwe is not premised on one philosophy of education. It is indeed a cocktail of philosophies put together for the development of the child. The major question therefore, is what characterizes early childhood education? Early childhood education is characterized by the notion that much of the child's learning and the building of the child's esteem takes place within the first stages of life from 0-5 years. Early childhood education should have a holistic approach to developing the child. Gammage (2003) observed that early childhood education is concerned with laying a foundation for an all-round development of the child for life. Such development should prepare the child for life. To satisfy the development needs of the child the curriculum should come up with approaches that accommodate such development. Such approaches include the child-centred model already alluded to. As noted by Darling (1994) the school should be made to fit into the needs and not the other way. As such, the curriculum should address the needs and interests of the child. In order to address the child's needs, there should be resources to support the implementation of the ECD programme. Such resources include both the human resources and the material resources. The question is that who should provide such resources? The answer to that question is not an easy one. Much depends on the educational philosophy and political ideology of the education planners and those in power. For example, in a country where the political ideology is socialist, attempts are made by the state to provide resources for its populace. In that regard education is viewed as a social benefit whose benefits accrue to society. On the other hand, within the capitalist ideology education is viewed as a private benefit and as such, the major contribution should be from the individuals who will later benefit from their investment in education.

Having said that, there is the question on what philosophy is guiding the designing and implementation of the ECD curriculum in Zimbabwe. As noted in the objectives of the ECD syllabus, early childhood education in Zimbabwe had to develop physical health practices, physical skills, emotional skills and well-being, social skills, cognitive skills, and technological skills (CDU, 2011). Such skills were to be developed through five curriculum areas which are Expressive Arts, Language Arts, Mathematics and Science, Social Sciences, and Technology (ibid). No specific philosophy can solely lay claim to the development of these skills.

All the philosophies discussed above pay attention to the development of the individual, albeit for different reasons.

The methodology of teaching in Zimbabwe focuses on the development of the individual at his/her own pace and the teacher is seen as a partner, and guide. In that respect the philosophy has aspects of the Montessori approach, Rousseau and Dewey's approach. At the same time using the environment and the child's home language places emphasis on aspects of the philosophy of *unhu/ubuntu*. One is most likely to understand values and practices better when they are expressed in the first language. When we refer to an African Philosophy of Education, we are concerned with both the process and the product of that process. African Philosophy of Education should enable us to do at least the following:

- Challenge the status quo in terms of assumptions, beliefs and viewpoints about the function and relevance of education to an educated African. It should enable one to address and solve problems within the community, thus contributing to social and economic development.
- To transmit all the values, belief norms, patterns of behaviour, skills and wisdom from one generation to another (Barker, 1990).
- Africanise the education system.
- Accept and acknowledge that Africa like all other continents has its own philosophy of education which is guided by the traditional African practices of participatory education, character building, moral education and training, skills and knowledge development well grounded in customs and traditions of society.

CONCLUSION

The relevance of a philosophy of education cannot be over emphasized. The paper has examined different philosophies and perspectives of education. It has also highlighted the limitations of some of them. The ECD curriculum in Zimbabwe was used as a case to examine the relevance of some of these philosophies to education. The philosophies and perspectives examined include Progressivism, Marxism, and Unhu/Ubuntu. An analysis of the Early Childhood Development Education curriculum in Zimbabwe points to the presents of a cocktail of perceptions and philosophies of education. It may be concluded that progressivism has greatly influenced the ECD programme in Zimbabwe in terms of the aims, teaching methods, skills to be developed, the role of the child and the teacher. The ideas of the African Philosophy of Education in unhuism/ubuntuism as postulated by Samkange and Samkange (1980) are worth advancing in order for the education system to produce an educated being that is well grounded in societal ethos. By advocating for an African Philosophy

of Education we have to take cognizance of the scientific paradigm in which the education system now operates, but at the same time promoting African identity in the way we conduct our business.

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