

The paper discusses some African experiences in the diversification of secondary education, which is taken to mean curriculum change in a practical or vocational direction. This approach is intended to provide a wider set of future career options than is offered in the more uniform academic curriculum. The diversification policy has generally been seen as a solution to a number of economic and social problems facing the independent African countries, notably the increasing youth unemployment and the escalating costs of formal education.

Studies which have so far been carried out have, however, revealed that diversification programmes have not met the intended objectives, although there is sustained interest in vocationalising formal education. Problems which commonly face these programmes include high unit costs, an absence of clarity in aims and objectives, a shortage of qualified teachers and the low status of vocational subjects as viewed by the students and the community.

For future development, it is suggested that diversification programmes be reorganised to relate to more realistic goals through wider community participation and through the work-orientation of post-school training programmes.