

► **Education and Human Development:
Analytical Reflections**



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▶ *What is the relationship between education and poverty?*

- **Human Capital**

- Education for **building productive capacity** of individuals and nations, economic growth (Becker, 1993)
- Lack of education=> poor employment prospects and limited economic productivity, low income (**poverty**)
- Limitations of the human capital account?

- **Human Capability**

- Education for **expanding substantive freedoms** of people, human development (Drèze & Sen, 2002; Sen, 1999)
- Lack of education=> diminished genuine options, **capability deprivation** (or multidimensional poverty)

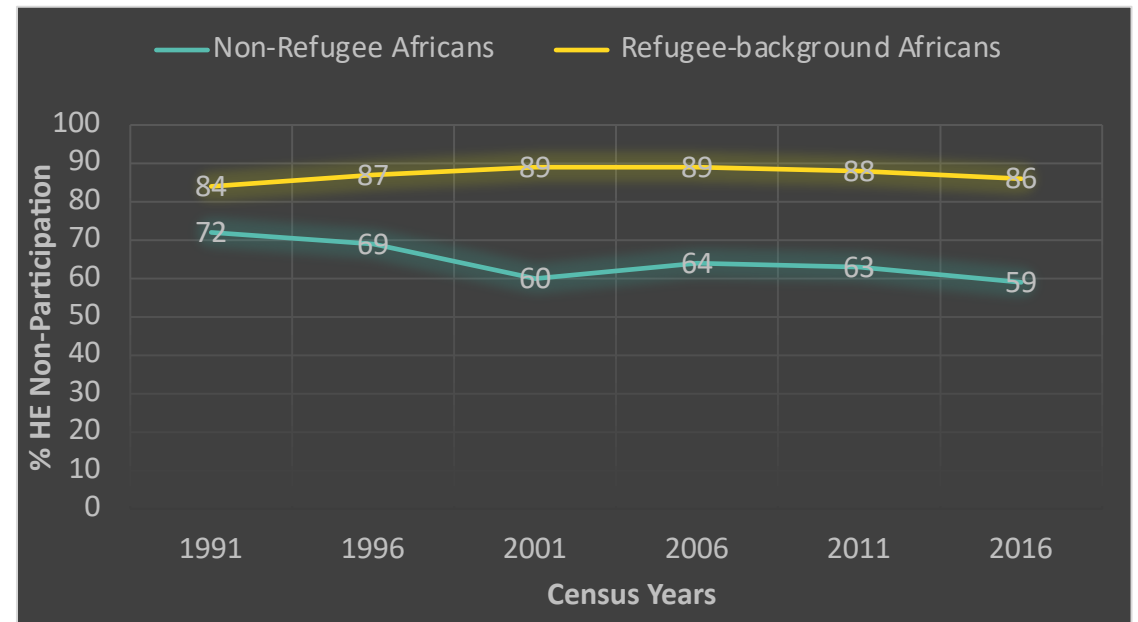
To what extent can education play a role in poverty reduction?

- If poverty constitutes capability deprivation, reducing poverty requires **capability expansion** through social arrangements, including **education**.
- However, the role of education in reducing poverty needs to be qualified. Widening access to education on its own may not lead to growth and poverty alleviation.
- Hence, following Sen, I argue that education expands human capability (and thereby reduces poverty) to the extent that people:
 - (a) have substantive (adequate and relevant) opportunities
 - (b) can convert their opportunities into valued outcomes

▶ (a) Adequacy

- Substantive educational opportunities are **equitable**, not necessarily equal. Equality assumes similarity of conditions and treatment while equity calls for reasonable adjustment to provide compensational opportunities in accordance with the needs of target groups.
- In other words, **adequacy** presupposes **recognition of specific sources of disadvantage** that require **compensatory** policy measures.
- African refugee youth in Australia: **HE equity** provisions and **multidimensional poverty**

Fig. 1. Percentage of young Africans (18-30 y/o) who had no degree and were not attending university within 5 years of their arrival; *computed based the national population census data, 1991-2016*



(b) Relevance

- Education plays critical roles freeing people from deprivation when it is relevant—when it is responsive to personal needs and collective aspirations for progress.
- Ethiopia: Exponential **expansion of educational opportunities** and **entrenched poverty**



▶ (C) Conversion

- Education supports human development to the extent that people's conversion abilities are not constrained by internal and external factors associated with systemic arrangements, institutional practices, interpersonal relations, and personal conditions (Robeyns, 2017; Sen, 2017).
- Gendered societies: **Availability of educational opportunities** and the **educational attainment of girls and women**



▶ **What needs to change?**

- Education expands genuine options (and helps reduce poverty) when it is substantive and when it can be transformed into valued outcomes.
- Hence, in assessing the relationship between education and poverty reduction:
 - (a) our **informational basis of judgement** needs to include accounts of who gets what and within which conditions.
 - (b) We need to recognize external and internal barriers that mediate the ability of disadvantaged people to benefit meaningfully from educational opportunities

