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Murder at Sharpeville, 21 March 1960 by Godfrey Rubens/ CC Wikimedia.

Vol. 15 (May - November 2014)

MARGINALIZATION IN AFRICA

No. 1 - May 2014
Editorial: Marginalization in Africa- Is the End in Sight?

By the Ezine Editors This editorial introduces Volume 15. It attempts to set a foundation for the volume by examining what marginalization is and what some of historical factors are that have driven marginalization. The article switches focus to explore what kind of progress has been made to reduce experiences of marginalization, specifically by looking at issues of healthcare.

No. 2 - June 2014
The Afro-pessimistic 'Rising' and Afro-optimistic Uprising.

By Patrick Bond Much has been said about the economic renaissance on the continent that is supposedly reducing the marginalization of millions of Africans. However, Patrick Bond argues that these economic factors are not a real cause to celebrate. A greater cause for celebration could lie with increasingly agitated populations mobilizing together.

No. 3 - July 2014
Devolution – the turning point for the marginalized in Kenya.

By Timothy Gachanga Eighteen months have passed since the devolved government system became operational in Kenya. Timothy Gachanga examines the effects this has had on reducing levels of marginalization among the people of Mandera County.

No. 4 - August 2014
Towards the promotion of women's rights in Nigeria.

By Boluwatito Coker Historical legacies, oppressive cultural norms and a complex, often contradictory, legal system are three factors Boluwatito Coker explores as reasons for the continued marginalization of Nigerian women. The fight to advance women's rights will require a re-conception of the patriachal order within society.

No. 5 - September 2014
Ugandan Teachers: Paid so little for so much.

By Tumusiime K. Deo T.K. Deo examines why Ugandan teachers have historically been mistreated by the Ugandan government. While other public sectors have seen increases in funding, salaries for teachers remain below an acceptable level. Despite education being a foundational element for the Millennium Development Goals, Ugandan children are paying the price of a neglected educational sector.

No. 6 - October 2014
Fighting albinism's stereotypes.

By Rutendo Mawere Albinism is an unfortunate genetic disorder affecting thousands of people in Africa. Rutendo Mawere examines the daily challenges facing people with albinism in Zimbabwe, and the dangerous myths and stereotypes that are widespread across Africa. What needs to be done to ensure albinism is recognized as being a medical condition and not a curse?

No. 7 - November 2014
The Colour of My Skin.

By Khairoon Abbas Mixed-race issues are not frequently discussed in Tanzania. In this essay, Khairoon Abbas provides a personal narrative, while exploring the legacy of historical and political factors within the relationships between people of different ethnic origins in Tanzania. Eradicating racial marginalization is one step towards greater socio-economic inclusion.

Marginalization in Africa: Is the End in Sight?

by Ezine Editors

David Olive recently asked in the Toronto Star if a new economic dawn for Africa is capable of lifting millions of Africans out of poverty. There may be hope, reflected in an unprecedented economic boom, GDP growth from 5% to 10%, and a growing middle class. There has been rapid economic growth but this does not necessarily translate into developmental gains. In time, this recent economic resurgence may perhaps be viewed as a key moment setting Africa towards a better future. However, Olive suggests that economic growth is not enough and many African states have been incapable of responding to the needs of their people: "Frenzied activity has not been accompanied by social investment and governance reforms, providing improved schools and public-health initiatives, and the eradication of government and private-sector corruption." (Olive, 2013) The failure of states means that the majority of people across the continent remain marginalized and excluded from real social, economic, cultural and political progress. However, there has been some success and a certain amount of progress that could influence Africa's future.

This editorial begins a volume of monthly articles that will interrogate the issue of marginalization and the levels of progress being made to reduce the inequities. It will question the origins and nature of marginalization. What drives it? What would progress look like? Is there any being made? This editorial will look at these questions through a healthcare lens. After this, six different writers will explore other factors and examine whether there has been progress in different contexts of marginalization across Africa. In June, the volume continues with a critique of the political and economic forces behind the much-heralded indications that Africa is rising. After that, there will be a state-focused article asking questions of progress in the politics of Kenya. The articles that follow will discuss: the cultural struggles of, and progress made by, Nigerian women; how Ugandan teachers face up to economic and social realities; the problems of exclusion confronting people with Albinism in Zimbabwe; and finally, in November, to lead into our next volume on women's empowerment, a feminist perspective on the marginalized mixed-race populations in Tanzania.

What is marginalization?

What do we mean by marginalization and the resulting social exclusion? The two are sometimes conflated. A fine distinction reads, "marginalization means… weakening of the ligatures between the individual and the society. Social exclusion is the utmost form of marginalization." (Lämsä, 2012) Social exclusion is "…a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack, or denial, of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole." (Levitas, 2007) This definition implies that the state plays a pivotal role. States that do not possess strong social bonds with their domestic population as a whole witness a greater degree of marginalization and more social exclusion.

States have a responsibility to provide their people with some basic human rights. States fail when they do not provide for, or withdraw protection of, the human rights of their people. Increasing marginalization and social exclusion gradually erodes these rights. These processes can be played out through various circumstances: "ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live" and across several levels, including the

A young male sits outside a shack in Kiberia, Africa's largest slum in Kenya.
©2007 Sean Hawkey, Courtesy of Photoshare

individual, family and community. Staying at the state level, "discrimination occurs

in public institutions, such as the legal system or education and health services."
(DFID policy paper 2005) Circumstances can be accentuated by those with
power, to exacerbate the political, economic, social and cultural problems of
suppressed groups.

What drives marginalization and social exclusion?

In Africa, like anywhere, marginalization and social exclusion were not created in
a vacuum. The extent to which they exist is a result of a combination of factors
that are unique to each growing story of African statehood. A non-exhaustive list
of factors includes: the cohesion of pre-colonial society, the depth of colonialist
interference, the post-colonial interaction with a conglomerate of neo-colonial
external actors implicated in African affairs since independence*, African
leadership and policy choices. They have provided some of the conditions for the
way of life of millions of people. How African governments have responded to
these factors is instrumental in explaining the patterns of marginalization and
social exclusion that exist today.

Here, we look at colonial antecedents and the post-colonial legacy. Historical
factors should not be viewed as old and static because they set the foundations
for explaining the origins of marginalization and social exclusion. They are an
important spark. While not deterministic, they acknowledge that the genesis of
marginalization and social exclusion can be related to a country's unique colonial
experience. This helps provide some contrast to better understand why things go
right when they do. Along with their response to other factors that set the
conditions, the ability of states to respond to their unique colonial legacy is
reflected in how they exhibit leadership, create policies and govern.

At the
onset of
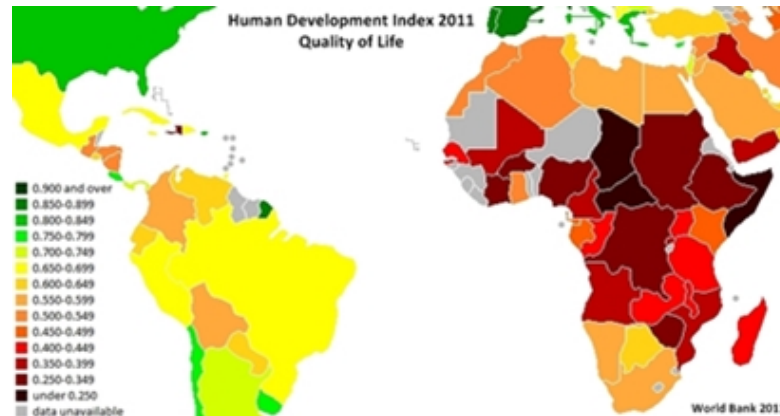
independence, each colonial legacy was a question to be addressed by emerging
African governments. On the whole, "[f]rom the 1870s onwards, the integration of
labour, capital and commodity markets promoted by empire was very much
skewed towards its 'white' settler societies. The economic benefits of empire for
the so-called dependent colonies were much more meagre in comparison or did
not exist at all…. We should remember that for much of the last century the form
of globalisation the world experienced rested on a view of social relations
governed by racial hierarchies." (BBC, 2011) This is a disadvantageous starting
position from which to build equitable societies. Colonialism was rooted in
violence, and predicated on solidifying power, the exploitative control of others,
and reaping material wealth for as long as possible.

In some cases, African ruling classes were able to manipulate and extend this
power for their own benefit. The colonial mission, vision and values were
antithetical to the formation of any meaningful relation with the general body
politic for self-rule. It was rather in the interest of the state, as understood by the
new African ruling classes, to appropriate some of the colonial imprints within the
structures of the state to pursue predatory policies. The inherent inequities of
these policies underpinned the transition to a political legacy of authoritarianism
for new African governments. "In post-independence Africa, most states became
authoritarian. Rather than distribute benefits in a universalistic manner,
incumbents could now allocate them more narrowly, thereby retaining a greater
portion for themselves." (Bates 2008, p.47) This, "restructuring of African political
institutions thus triggered a logic of exclusion, resulting in political privilege and
economic inequality." (*Ibid* p.51) Driven by the strengthening of incentives for

political elites, the logic of exclusion is powerful and polarizing. As witnessed by the fact that the post-independence period has failed to see many equitable and equally binding social contracts being instilled between states and their people. Most Africans have had little to do with determining the legitimacy of state power. Disparate groups live within fabricated state lines, with little consideration of their needs. This divides the haves and have-nots across populations. It stunts the development of an equitable relationship between the state and its people because that tendency to intensify inequalities can become entrenched within societal structures and the lineages of the state over time. (Poku and Mdee, 2011).

Unchecked, marginalization and social exclusion grow as people and the state diverge. The state coerces groups to exist outside of their society from within. It is this relationship with the state that is dire and threatening to individual and community well-being. "Tensions simmer where people are excluded, marginalized and denied meaningful participation in the political and social life of their countries… Unrest flourishes where people are poor, jobless and without hope." (UNSC, 2013) This aggravates opportunities for conflict. In some cases, it is unclear whether the colonial legacy has ever been fully resolved.

In other cases, however, African governments have been better able to overcome the colonial imprints specific to their situation. Governments that are able to resolve this question, by rejecting the central tenets of colonial dogma, are in a better position to be able to make the necessary structural changes that will have long lasting benefits for their people by favouring societal gains over predatory gains. It is the implementation of political, social and economic plans that, over time, strengthens social bonds in the population. Good leadership and more equitable policy choices are essential in trying to reduce experiences of marginalization and social exclusion. As a result, society becomes more cohesive and accessible to people.

In some places this is happening. In the case of Botswana, for example, a combination of various factors has contributed to post-independence success, among them, the fact that Botswana did not have a colonial experience that was as deeply felt as many other sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. This is a condition more conducive for expressing strong leadership and generating inclusive policies. Policies were set forth that would increase personal freedoms, induce economic growth, open up trade opportunities, and reduce corruption. In other countries, such as Rwanda, Niger and Ghana, the depth and repercussions of colonial reach has varied markedly. Eventually though, in

A civil society project brings together citizens, civic activists and elected officials to discuss transparency and accountability, DRC.
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each case, the question of legacy is addressed enough to subsequently help governments adopt improved policies that have led to structural changes. **According to one Index**, these countries are variously seeing some improvements in areas like education, governance, personal freedoms, economy, entrepreneurial opportunities and health. There's still much to do but this is encouraging. It shows what kind of progress can be made.

What does progress look like? Healthcare as an example

The Index mentioned above also indicates, relative to the rest of the SSA region, the nine countries that rank highest in governance are the same ones that score highest in health ratings (Table 1). This suggests a degree of good governance is linked to better overall health outcomes in the population.

2013 Legatum Prosperity Index (Governance rank, Health rank)		
Botswana (1st, 3rd)	Namibia (2, 9)	Rwanda (3, 2)
South Africa (4, 4)	Ghana (5, 1)	Malawi (6, 5)
Benin (7, 8)	Niger (8, 7)	Senegal (9, 6)

Individual health is important to everyone. It is a basic human right that beholdens

a state to provide healthcare services to its population. The affordability and accessibility of healthcare services are more likely to be efficient, effective and to reach more people if countries' policies on health are embedded within state structures that are increasingly cohesive and inclusive. The situations in the countries listed above are not perfect. Their citizens, however, are better off in terms of broad health outcomes than the people who live in countries that lag at the bottom of African governance ratings (e.g., Chad, DRC and Guinea). In these places and others, **'Politik Kills'**.

An HIV/AIDS-orphaned young girl plays at a burst sewage pipe in Kenya.
©2009 Suleiman Mbatiah, Courtesy of Photoshare

States with poor governance demonstrate a greater inability and unwillingness to respond to their peoples' health needs. This contributes to rising inequalities or inequities[+]. Within the African context, the extent of negative health is an indictment of state failure. "Health is fundamentally a political question; it is a key signifier (more so than economic growth) of the state of the nation and of the provision of basic services… Poor health is therefore not simply a description of the condition of the continent; it is perhaps the starkest indicator of political failure." (Poku and Mdee 2011, pp. 99-100). Inherently unequal power relationships mean that marginalized people have little ability to change dysfunctional state apparatuses. This, "combined with international influence on the role of the market and cost sharing in the delivery of services, has fundamentally prevented the development of robust and effective primary healthcare systems." (*Ibid* pp. 118-119). The gulf in health inequalities and inequities between states and their people is symptomatic of marginalization and social exclusion maturing. Given the power structures in several African states, the community well-being and public health of the population is an afterthought at best.

An interesting question arises. If an ideal outcome to aim for is universal health coverage, how can it be integrated within the social fabrics of countries that experience high levels of marginalization and social exclusion? In other words, "how can one 'include' people and groups into structured systems that have systematically 'excluded' them in the first place?" (Labonte, 2004) Health inequalities between the haves and the have-nots within many African societies are apparent as African health systems, in general, remain underfunded, overstretched, and understaffed.

Encouragingly, several countries have committed more funds to healthcare in recent years, demonstrating some positive results. Despite this, "increased wealth does not necessarily lead to improved health, particularly for the poorest segments of society." (African Development Bank 2013, p. 1) Inclusive and equitable policies can help translate that money into promoting healthier outcomes for the most marginalized people. Misspending by governments also creates inequities of access leading to an increase in out-of-pocket spending on health services. The poorest segments of the population are most adversely affected by this, being encumbered with greater costs. This is amplified when resources in the country are skewed to the top. Not only are the poorest least served by the 'public provision of curative services,' (Castro-Leal 2000, p. 71) but private coverage remains unobtainable and the public spending that does occur will benefit the wealthier classes more. Public health dollars are not being spent effectively to address the needs of all of society, especially the poor.

Nonetheless, there are successes. Certain progress is being made across health outcomes in SSA, as the following three examples illustrate: (1) Overall, life expectancy in Africa has increased from 38 years in 1950 to 56 years in 2012. (2) More and more HIV-positive people are receiving better antiretroviral drugs. (3) Significant funds focused on tackling the three biggest killers—HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis—have had an impact. However, progress is relative. It depends on where you are coming from and where you want to go. A patchwork of solutions does not always make a quilt of progress.

Structural progress is different from finding solutions to specific issues. For instance, more HIV-positive people receive better drugs, but Africa still accounts for 66% of the global burden for HIV/AIDS. (AfDB, 2013) In part, this is because prevention efforts have had little influence on affecting the spread of the epidemic.

Overall structural progress will help overcome societal inequities driving the HIV/AIDS endemic. This will mean improvements in areas such as women's rights, access to sex education, increased provision of female/male birth control, and better access to drugs and treatment for the marginalized. There are strands of progress nationally. Some countries are experiencing compelling reductions in new HIV cases (e.g., Malawi, Botswana and Namibia). This suggests more inclusive health policies have been adopted, especially towards women and children.

Millennium Development Goals: 2013 Progress Chart (abridged)

Goals and Targets	Africa		Asia
	Northern	Sub-Saharan	Eastern
GOAL 1 | Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger			
Reduce extreme poverty by half	low poverty	very high poverty	moderate poverty*
Productive and decent employment	large deficit in decent work	very large deficit in decent work	large deficit in decent work
Reduce hunger by half	low hunger	very high hunger	moderate hunger
GOAL 2 | Achieve universal primary education			
Universal primary schooling	high enrolment	moderate enrolment	high enrolment
GOAL 3 | Promote gender equality and empower women			
Equal girls' enrolment in primary school	close to parity	close to parity	close to parity
Women's share of paid employment	low share	medium share	high share
Women's equal representation in national parliaments	low representation	moderate representation	moderate representation
GOAL 4 | Reduce child mortality			
Reduce mortality of under-five-year-olds by two thirds	low mortality	high mortality	low mortality
GOAL 5 | Improve maternal health			
Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters	low mortality	very high mortality	low mortality
Access to reproductive health	moderate access	low access	high access
GOAL 6 | Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases			
Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	low incidence	high incidence	low incidence
Halt and reverse the spread of tuberculosis	low mortality	moderate mortality	low mortality

The words in each box indicate the present degree of compliance with the target. The colours show progress towards the target:
Green: Target already met or expected to be met by 2015.
Beige: No progress or deterioration.
Red: Progress insufficient to reach the target if prevailing trends persist. © UN 2013 MDG Progress Chart

Women in Cameroon receive membership intended to reduce out-of-pocket health care costs.
©2012 Okwen Patrick Mbah, Courtesy of Photoshare

Although life expectancy in Africa has increased, it is still the lowest in the world, and its rate of progress is the slowest among all regions. (AfDB, 2013) **Africa also has the highest death rates**. This suggests less progress has been made in tackling the burden of diseases that impoverish people in African countries. "The bulk of African countries' disease burden is due to the traditional 'developing country' mix of communicable diseases, nutritional deficiencies, and maternal and perinatal conditions." (Ibid p.7) This signifies that issues of public health, prevention, food security, and women's rights have not been structurally addressed. The countries that have better addressed structural deficiencies on these issues have shown a greater ability to reduce infant mortality rates and extend the lives of their people (eg., Rwanda and Senegal). Despite significant funding on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, arguably it has not been as effective as it could be. Limiting focus on specific issues may detract from strengthening broader public health systems, leaving other health concerns to get overlooked. The presence of public health is negligible in several places. However, places like South Africa and Ghana have taken steps towards building better public health systems in their countries. With the right support, these could be important examples for the future.

Is lasting progress being made?

Ideally, **socially-determined** universal healthcare in Africa would be embedded within a well-staffed and coordinated network of health-sector partners. Together, they would provide holistic, integrated, effective and comprehensive public healthcare systems for families, individuals and communities. The benefits of this coverage would reach far beyond improving and maintaining individual health outcomes. Good health has been identified as a crucial factor in poverty alleviation and sustainable development outcomes. (eg., Anyanwu and Erhijakpor, 2007) This is because people in good health are more likely to be economically productive and remain participatory members of their communities and families. Children are more likely to go to school. People have a future to plan for. (Rispel, 2009) In some respects, "Universal Health Coverage is the hallmark of a government's commitment to improve the wellbeing of all its

citizens." (WHO, 2012) However, even beginning down that road may not occur in parts of Africa much before 2060. (AfDB 2013, p.19) A hundred years on from independence, what will healthcare systems in SSA look like?

Many states have significantly improved some health outcomes for their people. Across the continent there has been real progress in some places but not in others. Will the others strive to bring more equity to healthcare? "Africa's healthcare systems are at a turning point. The reforms that governments undertake over the next decade will be crucial to cutting mortality rates and improving health outcomes in the continent." (Economist Intelligence Unit 2011, p.1) There are opportunities on the horizon. "Priorities and goals of the post-2015 agenda will be driven by the recent global commitment to Universal Health

A family planning clinic in the Kibera slums, Kenya. It provides services to people who have no access to the health care system.
©Nancy Muturi, Courtesy of Photoshare

Coverage (UHC)." (AfDB 2013 p. 18) Progress will continue as health systems continue to grow. However, sustained progress is needed considering the challenges ahead: climate change, civil conflict, high levels of societal disparities and booming population growth. Beyond 2015, nearly half a billion people in Africa will still be at the margins of society.

Redressing entrenched societal imbalances presupposes important modifications in the way a state behaves towards its people. In some cases, long-term structural progress may only be accomplished with a transformation of the state into becoming a more equitable partner of the people. Healthcare would be central from that perspective. Affordable and accessible healthcare for all is a means of decreasing marginalization. Indeed, healthier people translate into more involved people. That is a far-off goal for many African countries, and some will be resistant to change. However, more governments are taking the initiative to improve policies that promote greater health outcomes for their people through which experiences of social exclusion and marginalization can be reduced.

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* Conglomerate of external actors means here: Other states, especially former colonial empires and Cold War actors; political and economic global institutions, including the UN, the World Bank and the IMF; trans- and multinational corporations; and the illicit private-financial sector.

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The Afro-pessimistic 'Rising' and Afro-optimistic Uprising

by Patrick Bond

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In Maputo in late May, yet another 'Africa Rising' conference was the talk of the town, as Christine Lagarde (2014) and her International Monetary Fund staff repeated the mantra of 'governance, transparency and sound economic frameworks.' Getting these factors right, she claims, is responsible for Sub-Saharan Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth by 4.7 % in 2013, with anticipated rates increasing to 5.3 in 2014 and 5.4 in 2015.

© The Economist Front Cover 2011

At another fancy hotel nearby, I sat in a conference of ruling political party officials, of which several – our host the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo), plus the African National Congress (ANC), the South West People's Organisation (Swapo) of Namibia and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) – have long traditions of what they forthrightly call anti-imperialist politics.

The politicians' frank discussion about the IMF revealed how few really believed the Africa Rising hype. They recognised that the rhetoric it generates reproduces the kinds of banal, export-led,

primary product-dependent and extractive economic orientations we have seen in this region for so long (e.g. Perry 2012, Robertson 2013). Even though they themselves now benefit, as comprador allies of foreign capital, these party officials sense that this is what is responsible for southern Africa's world leadership in social inequality, ecological destruction, corporate corruption and social unrest. Swapo Politburu member Kazenambo Kazenambo, for example, had no hesitation in terming the current situation 'neocolonialism'.

Hungry. Source: Latha Rajvee

But no one had a plan to reverse matters, and worse, there is a new dimension that sometimes brings false hope: South-South exploitation. An unexpected threat – the addition of Brazil, Russia, India and China, with South Africa (BRICS) increasing its own regional dominance – is on the horizon. This in turn requires a much richer sense of Africa 'uprising' than we have had since the early 1980s (Bond 2006), and it is a future in which both resistance to extraction and national protest can fuse in a genuine bottom-up Afro-optimism that we seek in our conclusion.

What's being celebrated?

Let us first consider three arguments that are used to celebrate 'Africa Rising', and indeed form the essence of the 'Africa Rising' meme: the claim of a massive new middle class, the explosive increases in cellular telephony capacity, and the GDP and per capita GDP increases in sub-Saharan Africa.

According to African Development Bank (AfDB) chief economist Mthuli Ncube, 'one in three Africans is middle class,' and as a result, Africa is ready for 'take-off'. Yet, that 'middle class' is defined as those who spend between $2 (sic) and $20 per day. Higher prices of most consumer durables in Africa frustrate the fifth of the continent who are in the $2-$4 per day, while the range from $4-$20 per day amounts to 13 %, with only 5% spending more than $20 per day (Smith 2011). Ncube's definition of a 313 million-strong 'middle' is, simply, farcical (Enaudeau 2013).

Secondly, mobile use doubled between 2012 and 2013. Africans are far better off with cell phones, and the opportunities they present, than without them. However, there are profound weaknesses: the role of multinational capital in absorbing profits and dividends; the lack of genuine competition (collusion is notorious even in the largest economy, South Africa); relatively high prices for cell phone handsets and services; and limited technological linkages to internet service. Researchers Enrico Calandro, Alison Gillwald, Mpho Moyo and Christoph Stork (2010) have remarked on a host of ICT deficiencies. Across nearly all of Africa, cell phone penetration rates 'remain below the 40 percent critical mass

Filming of a grassroots initiative by highschoolers to get Wikipedia free on their cell phones. Source: Wikimedia Commons/ Discott

believed to trigger the network effects associated with economic growth… The Africa-wide broadband penetration rate is below 2 percent; internet connection costs are prohibitively high; digital literacy and the affordability of access devices like personal computers is expected to remain a challenge.'

As for the third argument of the 'Africa Rising' meme, GDP and per capita GDP increases in sub-Saharan Africa since around 1995, after fifteen years of decline, may seem impressive at first glance (Figure 1). However, they do not tell the full story.

But while GDP has risen, the concurrent looting of Africa's natural resources resulted in a dramatic decline in the continent's mineral and petroleum wealth. The category 'Adjusted Net Savings' incorporates such resource-stripping. The last dozen years witnessed a dramatic decline in Africa's broadest measure of wealth, including 'natural capital' in the form of non-renewable minerals and petroleum. In Africa, non-renewable resources are dug out of the soil by multinational corporations which repatriate the profits or transfer-price the revenues to their advantage. As a result, the permanent debit against genuine national savings – i.e. a decline in a country's natural capital stock, its 'family silver' – far exceeds the momentary credit to GDP.

By how much? It's impossible to say with any degree of accuracy. It is substantial and getting worse. Since the commodity boom began in the early 2000s, according to the 2011 World Bank report The Changing Wealth of Nations, Africa has suffered negative 'genuine savings': the continent is steadily growing poorer. Figure 2, from that book, shows that once non-renewable

Figure 1: Africa's rising Gross Domestic Product (% real, 1981-2012)
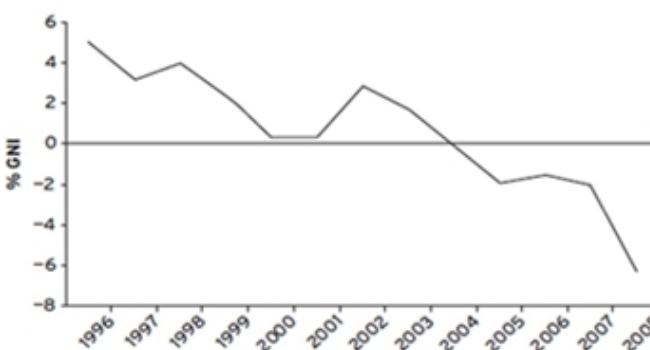
Source: AfDB et al, 2013
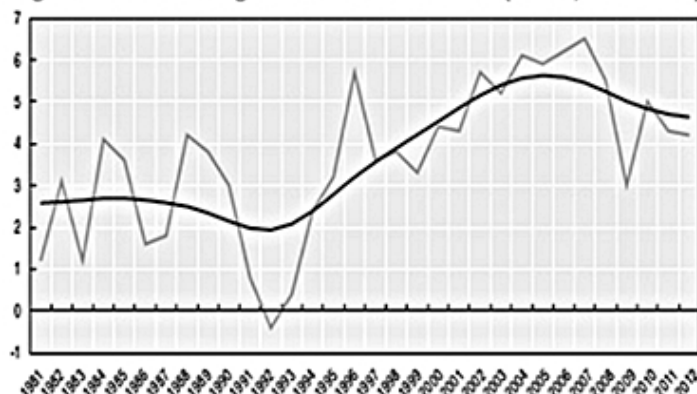
resources are removed from Gross National Income (GNI), along with other small adjustments, the fall in Adjusted Net Savings is sharp, to negative 6% of national income by 2008. This is mainly because of non-renewable resource decay in the context of resource-cursed neo-colonial politics.

Actually, The Changing Wealth of Nations is rather conservative in calculating non-renewable

Adjusted Net Saving in Sub-Saharan Africa as a Percentage of Gross National Income

Source: Authors' calculations based on World Bank data.

resource depletion, leaving out several important minerals (including diamonds and uranium), and also neglecting the tax fraud and transfer pricing associated with transnational capital. These problems are documented by Khadija Sharife (2011) in Tax Us If You Can and by Leonce Ndikumana and James Boyce (2011, 2012a, 2012b). Sarah Bracking and Sharife (2014) recently showed how $2.83 billion in mis-invoicing by DeBeers was condoned by an asleep-at-the-wheel South African diamond valuation office. Dick Forslund (2014) demonstrated massive under-recovery of stated revenues by the world's three largest platinum companies. These are just a few examples that rebut the Africa Rising mantra.

Other economic trends

At the same time its economy is allegedly booming, Africa is deindustrialising. According to ActionAid economist Rick Rowden (2013), 'despite some improvements in a few countries, the bulk of African countries are either stagnating or moving backwards when it comes to industrialization.' As Table 1 shows, the proportion of GDP made up of manufacturing – a typical sign of maturing economic activity – has been shrinking in Africa, from a peak of 15.3% in 1990 to 10.5% in 2008. Indeed from 1990-2010, manufacturing value added (MVA) fell in 23 African countries and was weak in 27 others (Unctad 2011). Of even greater concern, Rowden (2013) reports, 'Africa is also losing ground in labour-intensive manufacturing. Its share of low-technology manufacturing activities in MVA Added fell from 23 percent in 2000 to 20 percent in 2008.' At the same time, Africa's total imports and exports were falling in relative terms, from 6.5% to 4.9% of world volumes from 1980 to 2008.

Table 1:
Manufacturing shrinkage and mining growth, 1970-2008 (Source: UNCTAD, 2011)

	% share of GDP	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2008
Developing economies	Manufacturing	17.3	20.2	22.4	22.6	23.3	23.7
	Mining & utilities	5.7	14.7	8.9	8.3	10.1	10.9
African developing economies	Manufacturing	6.3	11.9	15.3	12.8	11.6	10.5
	Mining & utilities	4.8	19.3	15.2	18.4	23.0	25.8

The internal driver of growth in Africa during the 2000s, far outstripping manufacturing and even commodity exports, was 'private consumption.' One side effect, given African deindustrialisation of even basic consumer-durable industries, was the rise of import bills. These bills were covered thanks to a dramatic rise in private bank credit as a percentage of GDP: from 14.3 in 2002 to 19.0 by 2008. But the period from 1980 to 2004 was also replete with bank failures and credit contraction across structurally-adjusted Africa. According to John Karikari (2010), 'excluding the top 15 countries, the ratio of private sector bank credit to GDP declined by about 50 percent, on average, from 17.2 percent to 8.7 during this period.'

Financial markets in Africa are again deepening, which is important, but largely as a result of foreign inflows that are reaching dangerous levels, as even Lagarde (2014) remarked in Maputo. At what cost do foreigners enter our stock and bond markets? According to Joseph Stiglitz and

Hamid Rashid (2013), 'By February 2013 ten African economies had collectively raised $8.1 billion from their maiden sovereign-bond issues, with an average maturity of 11.2 years and an average coupon rate of 6.2 percent. These countries' existing foreign debt, by contrast, carried an average interest rate of 1.6 percent with an average maturity of 28.7 years.' Stiglitz and Rashid warn that when 'shortsighted financial markets' combine 'with shortsighted governments', this could lay 'the groundwork for the world's next debt crisis' in countries which they term Africa's 'subprime borrowers.' The debt is exacerbated by easy sovereign credit oriented to extractive infrastructure provided by China. Trade with China rose from around 5 to 20% of Africa's total from 1994-2012.

Another factor in Africa's decline is elite disinvestment, which continues to outpace aid and investment (Mbeki 2012). There was an estimated $1.4 trillion in capital flight from the continent – both sub-Saharan and North ends – from 1970-2010, according to research by Ndikumana and Boyce (2012a, 2012b). Moreover, since the global economic crisis replaced once-flush US and European public budgets with bank bailouts and an austerity mentality, Africa has suffered stagnant overseas development aid – already around 60% 'phantom' anyhow (ActionAid 2006) – to most African countries (except 14 'fragile states') (Elliott 2012).

In sum, is 'Africa Rising'? No, Africa is not rising for the millions of Africans who remain marginalized and excluded across the continent. Only the corporations which loot Africa and a very few comprador elites are prospering, and at great risk to both long-term and short-term prosperity, thanks to the extreme distortions they introduce. As Jumoke Balogun (2013) put it at the Compare Afrique website, 'Considering that Africa is the poorest and most underdeveloped continent on the globe, these numbers provide a startling account of the current state of play: the few who have, have everything, and the majority who don't, have nothing. This is not to suggest that Africans who have amassed great personal wealth are culpable for the alarming disparity, but this is what uneven development looks like. This is where Africa is. This is what many deem worthy of celebration.'

The editor of Pambazuka News, Ama Biney (2013), has also debunked 'Africa Rising' rhetorics: 'For whom does it rise? It rises for neoliberal and neo-colonial African governments selling off large tracts of land to outsiders for food or bio-fuel jatropha while their people go hungry and landless… It rises for a small African middle class whilst the 99 percent remain in the rural areas as farmers, unable to get subsidies like their European counterparts whose governments intervene on their behalf.'

Africa Uprising

Within the 'Africa Rising' narrative, we might regard the African elites pessimistically as a 1% with parasitical tendencies. Nevertheless, there are grounds for optimism, thanks to various 99% uprisings in Africa that emerged parallel to movements like Occupy and Southern European, Turkish and Brazilian mobilisations since 2011.

Recognising a major upswing in protests across the continent in one of their Africa socio-economic indicator reports, even the AfDB et al (2013) and Agence France Press acknowledged, 'Protests in sub-Saharan Africa were mostly over economic concerns. More than half of public protests were to demand salary increases or to complain against the increasing cost of living.' These were not isolated, for 'nearly all African countries faced increased protests' in 2011.


Occupy Nigeria cake, January 2012.
Source: Wikimedia Commons/ Stiftung

Protest counting methodologies differ across the continent. For example, South African police minister Nathi Mthethwa (2013) recorded 1882 violent protests in the year 2012-13, with thousands more non-violent protests. The year before, that count was 1,091; over prior years the peak had been 1,185 in 1998 and the trough was 562 in 2004 (Bond and Mottiar 2013), but the distinct trend line has been rising.

In 2013, more sophisticated cartographic representations and correlations to media databases became available, even if the Africa protest records found in northern press reports are a small

Figure 3: Public protest and civil violence in Africa, 1996-2012
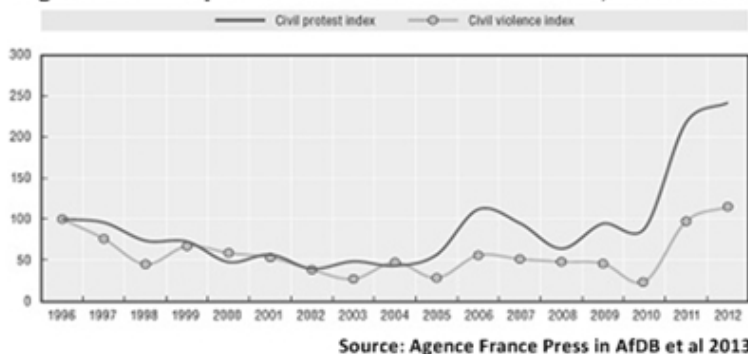
Source: Agence France Press in AfDB et al 2013

fraction of what was happening on the ground. Political scientist John Beieler mapped major protest events for the first eight months of the year, as shown in Figure 4, including on a month-by-month basis (e.g. April). Again, the undercounting is a serious problem, but the diversity of protest sites in Africa is revealing nevertheless. The increase in frequency of protests in Africa (and the world over) since 1979 **can be viewed here**.

Figure 4: Protests mapped, January-August 2013

Source: Beieler, 2013

Another way to assess the potential for African uprisings is to consult the World Economic Forum's annual Global Competitiveness Report. To the delight of Afro-optimists from below, that document's 2013 edition shows that the continent's labour activists are easily the world's most militant, even if not yet most effective. In one questionnaire given to representative samples of corporate managers, the topic of 'Cooperation in labour-employer relations' is quantified on a scale of 1 to 7, from 'generally confrontational' to 'generally cooperative.' The mean for the worlds' working classes was 4.3, i.e. with a bias towards quiescence. Table 2 shows partial results from the poll of 148 countries, and of 20 of the 39 African countries surveyed. In total, twenty-eight were higher than the world's mean level of militancy. South Africa was the most militant working class, for the second year in a row.

This degree of anger must, at some stage, result in a more effective uprising than has been accomplished anywhere to date, and South Africa may be most ripe, with a trade union movement exposing a clear divide between those more firmly committed to class struggle (the largest single union, the 340,000-strong metalworkers) and those still suffering an attitude of 'class snuggle'.

Table 2: Africa's relative working-class militancy – partial ranking

At the height of North Africa's uprising in 2011, the IMF's (2011) then managing director, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, was asked by a journalist, 'Do you have any fears that there is perhaps a far left movement coming through these revolutions that want more, perhaps, closed economies? I mean, there have been a lot of pictures of Guevara there.' His answer:

Global Ranking	-	Country	-	Militancy Score			
top 5 pliable working classes shown, followed by 20 African countries, rated 1-7							
1	Switzerland	6.0	54	Mali	4.5
2	Singapore	6.0	91	Morocco	4.1
3	Denmark	5.8	93	Uganda	4.1
4	Norway	5.8	95	Malawi	4.1
5	Netherlands	5.7	100	Nigeria	4.1
28	Gambia, The	5.0	141	Chad	3.3
32	Rwanda	4.9	142	Mauritania	3.3
36	Côte d'Ivoire	4.8	143	Burundi	3.2
38	Mauritius	4.8	145	Angola	3.1
45	Seychelles	4.6	148	South Africa	2.6

'Good question. Good question. There's always this risk, but I'm not sure it will materialize.' Strauss-Kahn interpreted these protests properly: as an attack on the 'Africa Rising' meme of extractivist, export-oriented neoliberalism, although he concluded in an Afro-pessimistic way: 'We're in a globalized world, so there is no domestic solution.'

But it is precisely because we're in a globalized world that there are so many extraordinary opportunities to link activists whose local campaigns against extractivism are readily joined by allies (Ekine 2011).

Let the majority rise

A few days before Lagarde's Mozambique trip, a rice 'land-grab' by Chinese investors north of Maputo which led to substantial displacement was the subject of peasant protests. This followed similar protests by Tete Province victims of the Brazilian firm Vale – itself now the main target of unified BRICS activists – and of India's Jindal, as well as of the Japanese-Brazilian ProSAVANA project in Nampula Province.

Andile Lile throwing excrement at the car of the Western Cape premier, June 2013. Source: Reaganpluscat.com

As the União Nacional de Camponeses (2014) peasant movement put it in a May Day declaration, 'the marginalization and total exclusion of peasants from the definition and prioritization of national development policies, particularly those with an agrarian focus; the systematic violations of peasants' land rights by mining, hydrocarbons and agribusiness megaprojects and other private and public investments; the successive attempts by certain sectors of government and others of increasing profitability and privatization of land, represent to us peasants a national emergency, for which we are called to position ourselves and toughen our resistance and struggle agenda. In 1975 the country knew Independence and Peace, but today communities are once again immersed in a setting of oppression by companies and by Government.'

Can such protests and sentiments coagulate and move from local to national to continental to global scales in the coming years? If so, what would they be potentially articulating as an antidote to the dominant narrative? Biney (2013) has the last word: 'If Africa is to rise, surely it must rise for the greatest majority of its people – particularly the unemployed youth in many African countries; those living with disabilities ostracised and stigmatised by cultural taboos and attitudes; albino individuals who also face similar stigmatisation; women; the poor; those in need of ARV drugs to prolong the quality of their lives as they live with HIV/AIDS as well as LBGTI individuals persecuted in many African countries?... If Africa is to rise, it must heed Thomas Sankara and "dare to invent the future" based on a new egalitarian economic system that centres people before profits and in which ordinary people critically control the production of what they produce and how they produce it.'

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Devolution – the turning point for the marginalized in Kenya

by Timothy Gachanga

Introduction

In the previous ezine series on **Ethnicity and Governance in Africa**, I expressed optimism that Kenya can succeed in forming a coherent Kenyan identity. One of the reasons for my optimism was the new constitution, which was promulgated on 4 August 2010 replacing the old one that had been in place since Kenya's Independence in 1963.

The promulgation was hailed as the birth of the second republic and as a significant step forward for Kenya's democracy. When the former President Mwai Kibaki introduced the constitution he extolled its virtues, describing it as "an embodiment of our best hopes, aspirations, ideals and values for a peaceful and more prosperous nation" (Ghai, 2014).

Indeed, the document marked the end of one of the longest journeys in Kenyan history: a two-decade struggle for reforms. It also delivered a mighty boost to the process of decentralization. This significantly changed the way power and resources are managed in Kenya. In addition, it signaled a new era for minorities and marginalized groups to enjoy rights like other Kenyans.

In the previous governments, the country was divided into eight provinces and over 100 districts, but executive power was largely vested in the central government headquartered in Nairobi. Nevertheless, the state was led by small political elite that controlled both political and economic power in the entire country. This led to strong feeling of exclusion and created a perception that one had to have one of their own in a key political public office to access government services and opportunities.

Today, there are 47 new county governments in charge of overseeing functions such as agriculture, health facilities, sanitation, transport and trade licenses. In turn, these county governments will receive a share (15%) of national revenues. They are also expected to mobilize revenue from other sources within their counties, such as taxes on property and entertainment. The national government remains in charge of education, security, foreign policy and national economic policy and planning.

Despite the many challenges that marked the take-off of the devolved government, devolution has proved to be a turning point for the marginalized in Kenya. This paper seeks to illustrate this by looking at how devolution has created a sense of identity and self-worth and inspired new hope for a prosperous future in Mandera County. The paper asserts that devolution is the 'magic bullet' that will make the country correct historical patterns of marginalization, which were carried over and perpetuated in the post-independence Kenya.

Mandera County

Mandera County is located in the north eastern part of Kenya. It borders Ethiopia to the north, Somalia to the east and Wajir County to the west and south. Its

administrative capital is Mandera Town. The county covers a total of 26,464 square kilometres and has a population of 1,025,756 people. A county map can be **found here**.

The county is largely semi-arid and most areas lack a permanent water source or water mass and report low rainfall throughout the year. The majority of the population are pastoralists who lead a nomadic life. And most of the homesteads are grass-thatched huts that are scattered widely. Harsh climatic conditions and poorly developed infra-structure make the county one of the most marginalized counties in the country.

In terms of economic activities, the county is a significant contributor to Kenya's economic strength. It accounts for 50–70% of livestock production and is home to 90% of the wild game that sustains the tourism industry (GoK 2006). Despite this, individual returns are minimal. The economic activities are incapable of sustaining livelihoods as 13.3% of all adults in the region live on help from local and international NGOs. They also don't utilize existing credit facilities available in the area. Only 4.5% of the poor and 1.1% of the non-poor sought credit in 2005 against a national average of 35% (KNBS, 2007).

The road network is poor. The road from Mandera to Nairobi for instance is full of potholes, gullies and detours, which has been the case for decades. "We have no roads and when a woman is in labour, the only means of transport is a ramshackle lorry, a camel or donkey to ferry her to a dispensary 200 kilometres away," laments the County Woman Representative Fathia Mahbub during celebrations to mark one year of devolution. "Many women therefore opt to deliver in Manyattas in unhygienic conditions, even without water."

A review of literature on access to heath in the county reveals a pathetic situation. The county infrastructure is poor and health facilities are far apart. Only 30% of the population lives within five kilometres of a health facility. The county inherited a health sector with 52 registered health centres but only 10 per cent of these were operational, with a skilled work force of 150. This lack of adequate medical facilities and inaccessibility of the few existing ones has led to high maternal mortality rates in the area. In 2012, the county recorded 3,795 deaths per 100,000 births with the majority of them being caused by inaccessibility to health facilities. This was the highest number of infant deaths recorded in the year and the highest national maternal mortality rate ever recorded in the world (Murimi, 2013).

According to the Kenya Population Situation Analysis report (NCPD, 2013), an estimated 4,000 of 100,000 expectant women die annually in Mandera. In addition, children born in Mandera have just a 50% chance of completing immunization or reaching their fifth birthday, while a pregnant mother has just an 11.5% chance of being attended to by skilled health worker. Over 80% of health facilities in the county are closed due to lack of staff.

History of marginalization

Some scholars (Mugo et al, 2010; Ringquist, 2011), attribute the county's marginalization to discriminative legislation enacted by the colonial government. They cite the District Ordinance Act of 1926 as one of the decrees that paved the

way to decades of marginalization. According to the ordinance, the Northern Frontier District (comprising present-day Turkana, Marsabit, Wajir, Mandera, Garissa, Isiolo and Samburu counties) were closed districts, and movement in and out of the region required special passes. Ringquist (2011) points out that this was meant to stop the ever increasing raids by Abyssinian (i.e., Ethiopian) soldiers and the westward expansion of the Somali pastoralists. In other words, the British intended the region to serve as a buffer between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland as well as to protect their economic aspirations in Central Kenya's White Highlands and the newly constructed East African Railway. This effectively created two nations in one and led to more exclusion and marginalization of the country.

In July 1964, only a month after independence, the region faced immense civil war. The decades of neglect, marginalization and discrimination under the British colonial rulers made the residents demand recognition and self-rule. This led to a secessionist 'Shifta' war that isolated the region further.

To deal with this 'menace' the region was declared a prohibited zone. Security personnel were empowered to shoot and confiscate livestock or property on suspicion of subversion. Detention camps were also erected to accommodate those persons considered politically dangerous (Whittaker, 2008).

This period of Shifta war (1960s – 1970s) was very significant in Kenya's history. Whittaker (2008) refers to it as the Resettlement Paradigm period. This was because development planning was concerned with the permanent settlement of destitute pastoralists. According to Mburu (2005), a system of government loans was announced in 1966 in an attempt to re-activate the livestock trade. However, these were only accessible to businessmen, the majority of whom were in the major towns and villages. There was also provision of water but water facilities were located in designated government villages and one had to comply with movement restrictions in order to access the commodity. This hampered herding activity and cattle accumulation which was their major source of income. According to Whittaker (2008), the intention was to counter insurgency and to separate Somalis from Shifta. These initiatives led to further marginalization of Mandera County.

In 1965, the government introduced constitutional amendments and new Acts such as Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 (by Finance Minister Tom Mboya). This act prescribed that, in order to attain rapid economic growth, resources would be allocated and concentrated in productive areas of Kenya and particularly along the railway line. This was directly linked to the nature of the economy, i.e. dependent on agriculture. This policy led to the neglect of what were considered as "low potential areas" leading to social and economic exclusion. This perpetuated marginalization of some parts of the country, especially far-flung regions and minority groups, from full participation in social and economic activities. The result has been significant levels of disparities in economic development among different regions and communities, which is manifested in under-development as exemplified in poor performance in schools, poor infrastructure and the absence of essential government services (Mugo et al, 2010).

On education, Mandera County was left out because the missionaries, who are credited for establishing schools in colonial Kenya, favoured agricultural areas adjacent to colonial settler farms. North Eastern Kenya was left out because it was a 'closed district' and most of the areas had already been inhabited by Muslims (Sifuna, 2005).

This situation continued after independence. As many commentators have observed, the people of Mandera rarely benefitted from the tenures of Presidents Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Moi and Mwai Kibaki in terms of revenue allocation and development projects. "Ours has been systematic marginalization of 50 years

plus. The first three regimes viewed Mandera from security lenses and all finances directed here went towards a handful of civil servants and security operations," said the County Governor while marking one year of devolution. This was due to political expendiency. As Mugo et al. (2010) point out, the population is too small for significant political capital and cannot exert influence to swing votes in any election.

Devolution - The turning point

Devolution in Mandera County was 'God sent.' It marked a new beginning for the county and created a sense of identity and self-worth that inspired new hope for a prosperous future. It also offered an opportunity for the residents to chart out a road map on how to possibly address the problems of marginalization. "Devolution is our only hope. We are finally in control of our destiny and we must support all efforts to succeed. We got very scanty resources over the years and now it is a new dawn," said the County Governor Ali Roba, while marking one year of devolution.

In the 2013/2014 financial year, the county was allocated Ksh 6.5 billion by the central government. This is far more than the old district received in 50 years. This has enabled the county to address the problems of insecurity, food shortage, water scarcity and health issues.

Food insecurity

To deal with the problem of food insecurity, the county government has developed a two-fold approach: to develop new irrigation infrastructure and to revive the existing ones, which have been in neglect for years. "To be food secure, the county plans to progressively revive all irrigation schemes along the Daua River and other seasonal streams to support commercial scale farming," said Mohamud Obsiye, the county executive for agriculture and irrigation (Baraza, 2013). Already, some 15,000 hectares (ha) of irrigable land have been identified for exploitation for agriculture. This is an addition to the 4000 ha already under irrigation in the agro-pastoral livelihood zone. Three irrigation schemes along River Daua have also been revived and Ksh 900 million put into more irrigation projects to arrest the food problems in the county. This is in addition to the Ksh 410 million already allocated to agriculture in the county budget.

The Gadudia scheme is one of the schemes that has successfully been revived and is currently 60% operational. The scheme has, potentially, 90 ha of irrigable land. This season 80 ha of land was irrigated and produced a yield of 5 bags per acre. Around 442 bags were harvested. The current market price for a bag of maize is US $50. This will therefore translate to about US $ 22,100 for the total harvest this season. In addition, the county government is providing farmers with seeds and fertilizer subsidies. The county government has also purchased four tractors to help farmers. In addition, the county is exploring markets in other counties in order to expand the market for farmers' produce. The county is also developing the livestock value chain, encompassing all aspects of livestock from production and veterinary services to markets by building a regional abattoir and tannery and smaller abattoirs in all five sub-counties.

This has led to improved livelihoods for many families. Most of the families undertaking irrigated agriculture are destitute and have no other source of income. They also do not own any livestock, a fact which makes them solely dependent on the government for help in form of famine relief food.

Health

With the new constitution, the right to health care services is provided for. Chapter 4 on the Bill of Rights states in Article 43 (1a) that every person has the right to the highest attainable standard of health, which includes the right to health care services, including reproductive health care, and in Article 43(2), that a person shall not be denied emergency medical treatment.

To tackle health issues, the county government has set aside Ksh 540 million to improve health facilities in the county and to hire more medics. "We will make sure all our current health facilities that have become ghost facilities due to lack of healthcare personnel and medicine shall be operationalised fully," said the county governor in a press statement. Among these, Ksh 490 million will be spent to

improve 43 health facilities and Ksh 450 million will be used to buy hospital equipment, drugs, pharmaceuticals and to launch public health campaigns, while Ksh 50 million will be used to hire staff (Baraza, 2013).

In June 2014, the county bought nine ambulances to strengthen health services in the county since it had only one ambulance. It also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kenya Red Cross for provision of specialized Ambulance services to the County. In the agreement the Kenya Red Cross will avail six fully equipped ambulances with trained staff attached to each. According to the county governor, this is a big step in ensuring that county residents enjoy their most fundamental right: the right to life. The ambulances will be used on outreach services and are equipped with a radio call network so that they can be reached with ease when out on outreach services. According to the governor, this will be a milestone in the history of the county since there has not been an emergency service before (Obala, 2014).

Water scarcity

To address water scarcity, the county government plans to increase the water supply through rehabilitation of two existing water supplies. These are the Mandera and Rhamu water supplies. Already, some 240 million has been set aside for this project. Out of this amount, Ksh 193 million is earmarked for upgrading of structures at the Mandera project and Ksh 55 million for similar works at the Rhamu supply, which started six months ago. The Mandera supply caters for about 30,433 people within Mandera town and its environs while Rhamu supply serves 16,000 residents. Once complete, the residents' water supply is set to improve significantly.

Education

On education, the county government plans to focus on vocational training by developing technical education and establishing a public university by September 2014. They have also commenced school feeding programmes in a bid to keep children and teachers in school. School feeding programs have positive impacts in influencing access and retention in education. Experiences indicate that this programme has encouraged parents to send their children to school (MoE, 2008).

Security issues

To address problems of civil unrest, the county government has set up a Ministry of Public Service, Conflict Resolution, Cohesion and Integration to deal with inter-clan conflict prevention and resolution. "Clans used to fight due to resources but since the county government took over, we have managed to hold peaceful talks. More so, Mandera is the only county with an executive officer in charge of conflict resolution," said the county governor in a forum attended by county and national leaders from Mandera. A substantial budget has also been set aside for peace work.

The new ministry has established an excellent working relation with the representatives of the national government (county commissioner and county police commander) on the ground. Currently, the county is piloting an innovative approach to community policing, where they have taken steps to professionalize the Kenya Police Reservists (KPR) in collaboration with the National Police Service. About 140 KPRs from the different clans have already been put under a common command and control structure and are being provided with a monthly allowance, uniforms and patrol vehicles. This has greatly motivated the KPRs and improved security in the restive Mandera town (Atieno, 2013).

Conclusion

Eighteen months have passed since the devolved government system became operational. A cursory review of the performance of county governments reveals that devolution is truly the 'magic bullet' that will allow the country to correct historical patterns of marginalization that were inherited from the colonial period and even perpetuated in the post-independence phase. There are a number of reasons for these. Firstly, it has given people powers of self-governance and has enhanced their participation in exercising these powers in decision-making.

This means that marginalized Kenyans are now able to take charge of their development initiatives through the prioritization of their needs. Secondly, the marginalized are now able to claim a chunk of the national budget pie thus reducing the huge disparities in terms of access to the most basic services such as health, education and other public services.

This is important in that access to these services creates conditions for people to feel included and not suffer the painful consequence of being unable to afford them. Thirdly, there is now timely and efficient delivery of public services such as health care, education and infrastructure. This is a clear indication that an end to the decades of marginalization is on the horizon.

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Towards the promotion of women's rights in Nigeria

by Boluwatito Coker

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The promotion of women's rights is very important for any country. Apart from the moral and legal necessities of such advocacy, women are key contributors to the growth and development of a country's economy. This is why they have to be treated not as subordinates to men, but as equal partners and participants in the shaping and building of a nation. Nigeria is at an interesting position in its history. There are many challenges plaguing the country's desired development with the lack of protection of the rights of women enabling their continued marginalization. Many women in Nigeria do not enjoy the benefits of gender equality that their counter-parts in Western societies do. It is important not to portray Western culture as a utopic case but it remains a good model for Nigeria to try to emulate (or even surpass). There is so much potential in Nigerian society that is not maximized because of regressive traditions which oppress women. Women should be able to compete socio-economically, without any concerns about whether or not their gender will be a detracting factor in the fulfillment of their endeavours.

This essay intends to understand the problematic nature of gender discrimination in Nigeria, and to emphasize the role of culture in the shaping of women's future and ambition in the country. To arrive at this point, the historical marginalization of women in Nigeria will be discussed to discover its effect on the current state of women's rights. Three main challenges to women's rights in the country are examined, and the reasons why they need to be discussed are addressed with respect to the protection of women's rights. This essay argues that the state of women's rights in Nigeria needs a major overhaul, because of the pernicious nature of certain cultural practices on women's existence in the country. When this is done gender rights initiatives will enjoy increased success.

Historical analysis of gender struggles in Nigeria

Women's rights advancement has come a long way in Nigeria - from the period of a blatant subversion of cultural norms, to the oppressiveness of colonial rule; and to our present day advocacy for the betterment of the cause.

In pre-colonial Nigeria, women were regarded as subordinate to men. In fact, their role in society was to fulfill motherly duties (Tripp 27). This, however, does not mean that women were not accorded some rights during this period. For instance, they could own personal property (but were prohibited from owning land) (Abdulraheem 3). Women even ruled alongside men in many parts of the country, well before the colonial era. In Eastern Nigeria, most communities had dual-gender structured governments that allowed women to participate in decision-making and governmental administration (Okeke 5). The leadership role of Queen Kambasa of the Bonny Kingdom was considered very significant in advancing women's rights in the region (Abdulraheem 6). Before colonial rule, women rulers were responsible, just as men, for decision-making in their communities.

The emergence of colonialism

Women's rights initiatives witnessed considerable subjugation during this era. The British introduced changes to pre-colonial Nigerian culture, which deterred the furtherance of women's rights (Okeke 7). Traditional social structures that Nigerian communities previously enjoyed were not respected upon colonial emergence. In politics, for example, women were formally sidelined.

In some cases, women refused to be passive and intensified efforts to redeem their rights. For example, women in Aba (in Eastern Nigeria) were motivated to express disapproval, in protest over the state's imposition of draconian taxes on them (Abdulraheem 7). They demonstrated half-naked on the streets, until they got the attention of state authorities. Many Warrant Chiefs were forced to resign as a result. It was a strong desire to be rid of such oppressive trappings that precipitated the advent of many of the women's rights movements in Nigeria.

Overall, colonialism had a hampering effect on the advancement of women's rights in Nigeria. Some scholars argue that the main reason for the weakness of civil societies in Africa is because of the minuscule level of mobilization that could be organized during colonial rule, and also because of how the development of civil society was purposefully curtailed by colonialists (Tripp 8).

Since 1990

It was only in 1992 that the National Commission for Women was tasked with ensuring that women's rights were well protected, and that marginalized women were able to reintegrate into the community (Ako-Nai 107). Women in Nigeria (WIN), one of the foremost women nationalist groups, contributed very much to the realization of this goal (Ronke 107). Importantly, women's rights activists, such as Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti and Oyinkan Abayomi, fostered the political participation of women during and after the colonial era, by leading social movements that espoused the importance of social reformation.

The return to democratic rule in 1999 has not led to any noticeable increase in the participation of women in politics. This unimpressive participation of women violates the recommendation of the Beijing Declaration on Women's Rights, which Nigeria is a party to (87). The Declaration holds that there should be a minimum of 30 percent representation of women in politics. In fairness, there are more women in government now than there were during the colonial and military eras. However, they predominantly occupy low-level positions, even when they are as capable as men to fulfill more senior political and professional positions.

The present day

Today, activists like Josephine Okei-Odumakin have continued to promote women's rights campaigns in Nigeria, even amidst apparent threat and suppression. One salient case she is involved in concerns the women who were sodomized in Ejigbo, Lagos, for petty theft. These women were stripped naked and abused with pepper. One of the women died shortly after the incident. Josephine Okei-Odumakin and the Women Arise for Change Group, has organized protest walks around the city and even to the governor's office, where she was reassured that justice will be served. If not for her persistent efforts, this case would not be making progress in court.

There are many women's rights groups in Nigeria at the moment. The Federation of Women Lawyers, and the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative, are just two of such purposeful and valuable organizations. There is even the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, a ministry mandated to promote women's well-being. The problem, however, is that even with the existence of these groups, and the great effort they constantly exert, not much progress has been recorded in the promotion and protection of women's rights.

According to Ogbaji and Nwankwo, success can also be measured with regard to a movement's goals, or according to some higher standards of social justice. They argue that instead of focusing on the gains that women have achieved, efforts should be made to explore the more subtle ways in which the movements have shaped consciousness (3). If this is the case, then women's rights groups in Nigeria have achieved monumental success over time, because they have been able to sensitize the public to their goals and ideologies and have influenced

decision-making in society. However, contemporary challenges impede the advancement of women's rights in Nigeria, this essay will examine three such examples.

Marital violence and rape

Many women are still victims of domestic violence in Nigeria, despite the promulgation of domestic laws, and the ratification of international equality rights legislations. In a recent small-scale study in Lagos and Oyo states, researchers found that about 20 percent of women have been victims of domestic violence in the past (Ola 299). The Sexual Violence Research Initiative also revealed that the highest rates of domestic (and sexual violence) are as a result of harm caused by intimate partners (WHO). It is not that there are no legal protections against such atrocity. There are sections of Nigerian statutes that proscribe gender-based violence specifically. The Lagos state government, for instance, worked hard in 2007 to enact the Protection against Domestic Violence Law, but frustratingly, violence against women still burgeons in the state (Ronke 41).

The problem is that there are still many discriminatory laws in the country, which give men the justification for domestic violence. For example, Section 55(1) (d) of the Penal Code (in Northern Nigeria) permits a man to beat his wife correctively, and as long as it does not inflict severe harm (Ronke 37). This sort of legislation must be repealed, because it only impedes the advancement of protective measures to be taken against domestic violence. There is so much laxity with the way laws are enforced, that many women do not even know they can seek legal recourse in the face of violence. Ola substantiates this claim by arguing that many Nigerian women are unaware of their rights in marriage (296). Even worse, they cannot exercise such rights, because the current legal climate, together with rigid cultural structures, does not give women the confidence to do so later.

The problem with this is that it totally marginalizes women's autonomy and sexual agency. As culture demands, once a woman is married, she must submit herself, in totality with her sexuality, to her husband's desires (Ifemeje 5). This implies that she must satisfy her husband's sexual needs without resistance, because the idea of coerced sex does not exist within marriage. Marital rape is also a cultural means to assert masculine dominance over women, and maintain a patriarchal social order, in the event of a domestic dispute. This can prove dangerous, however, when the woman is concerned about health risks (e.g. contracting HIV/AIDS) (Ifemeje 5).

Many women in Nigeria experience rape in marriage. The Nigerian legal system does not recognize marital rape as an offence, but skirts around proscription of the act by promulgating vague laws, which touch on broader, more general issues, (e.g. sexual violence) (Ifemeje 41). It is not that there is no legislation against rape. For instance, Section 6 of the Criminal Code says rape has to be of an 'unlawful and carnal' nature, and so any consummation in marriage is within the confines of the law (Ifemeje 42).

Nigeria's rape laws should not coalesce with oppressive cultural norms. Around the world, rights discourses are gaining much traction. Many formerly acceptable cultural practices are now considered serious infringements to women's rights. Nigerian women must begin to enjoy an increased promotion of their rights, just as some other African nations are doing. In Cameroon, long held widowhood customs are slowly being eradicated. Morocco recently criminalized forced marriage to a rapist. Previously rapists were able to escape criminal sanctions by marrying their victim. However, with the amendment to Article 475 of the Moroccan Penal Code, rapists will now be criminalized for their actions (Bakhadda). Nigeria's rape laws should reflect an evolution to conform with globally recognized standards. Just as Morocco has shown, it is possible, (albeit with pressure from women's rights groups), to separate harmful cultural practices from the administration of fair law in Africa. Reconfiguring oppressive cultural norms is a good step in the struggle for gender equality in Nigeria.

The problems of early marriage

Early marriage still constitutes a major challenge to gender equality in Nigeria, as many regions in the country still practise this custom (Akpan 70). Among the Ibibios of Eastern Nigeria, early marriage has historic underpinnings, as culture demands

that most females marry as early as thirteen years old, (although this is quickly changing) (Akpan 70). In Northern Nigeria, many girls are wed as soon as they become twelve years old. It is the custom, and provisions in Sharia law support this act.

Many parents force their female children into early marriage for many reasons. Most prominent is the need to conform to historic customs and traditions. It is becoming more apparent that culture and tradition pervades all facets of Nigerian society, even to the extent that laws cannot be enforced, due to the risk of conflicting with existing customs. Nonetheless, there are existing statutory laws, which are nationally jurisdictional in nature, and which should protect girls from early marriage. Although such laws exist, they are not often enforced because of how vague they are. Section 29 of the Criminal Code stipulates that it is only those who are of "full age" that can marry (Akpan 71). Of course, "full age" can mean different things. Nigerian Senator, Ahmed Yerima, for instance, interprets this requirement as when a girl is permitted, by Islamic requirements of maturity, for marriage. This explains why he married a twelve-year-old girl from Egypt, even amidst public decry of such an abominable act (Ronke 38).

The peculiar nature of our legal system(s) creates the atmosphere for these acts to be perpetually committed. Seeing that we have pluralistic legal systems: Common law, Customary law, and Sharia law- - it is no wonder that there are many challenges with the primacy of one legal system over the other (Durojaye 176). The application of these systems together, in a diverse country like Nigeria, certainly has grave repercussions for women's rights in the country (Durojaye 178). Meaning, even though Statutory law prohibits underage marriage (for all the health and social concerns it causes), customary and Sharia laws tend to create a permissive atmosphere for it. This perpetuates gender inequality. It is not just on the laxity of the relevant legal frameworks but also the discriminatory cultural methods, which must be reassessed for Nigerian women to enjoy any tangible benefits from gender rights advocacy.

For the girls involved, early marriage strips their sense of self and autonomy. It has a debilitating effect on capacity for advancement, because with very minimal education many of them remain poor and economically dependent on their husbands (Akpan 74). In the extreme, it has lead to a vicious cycle of violence and criminality, where girls become entangled in the criminal justice system. Currently, there is a case in the Kano High Court, of a girl prosecuted for killing her husband, because she was often humiliated (Vanguard). This would not have occurred if such cultural practices were abolished, and if education was considered more important for the empowerment of young girls.

There are also the health consequences of early marriage on girls. One example- Vesicovaginal Fistula, is caused by obstructed labour during pregnancy. The girl-woman involved becomes incontinent of excreta, because of a permanent rupture to the uterus and bladder. Majority of VVF victims in Nigeria are within the twelve to twenty years of age, and are mostly from poor, uneducated backgrounds. Alarmingly, there are over 12,000 new cases of VVF each year in the country; estimated prevalence rates begin at 150,000 cases (Buchi).

Revisiting long-held customs and traditions

Culture should not impede a girl's rights to choose her life partner, nor should it force a woman to have sexual relations with her husband. Tradition should not make it the norm for women to occupy subservient positions, simply because they are women, while their capacity to perform optimally in higher roles is rubbished. As lauded Nigerian writer, Chimamanda Adichie stated in a speech, "Culture does not make people. People make culture. So, if it is in fact true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we must make it our culture" (Adichie). Culture should be amorphous - it should not be set in stone. As a society that strongly desires to develop in all ramifications, there must be a re-modelling of cultural practices that stand in the way of promoting women's rights.

Education is very vital to the actualization of women's self-empowerment. The Nigerian government has paid attention to the education of girls, but because of cultural beliefs (especially in the Northern region), many girls are restricted from getting an education (Dauda 203). It is shocking that this still occurs, because it

should be clear that women's contribution to nation-building, through education and enlightenment, is very important. In Nigeria, women make up the majority of farmers - an occupation extremely integral to the sustainability of the country. It is therefore disheartening that they remain socio-economically marginalized, because of their cultural status as women in society.

The situation calls for a re-conception of highly-held customs and traditions, which have only served to perpetuate oppressive patriarchal structures, and have marginalized women in the process. As Okeke states, any attempt to re-examine Nigerian women's place in the society, must begin with recognizing the historical passage which has placed them in a subservient position to men (7). It is only then that much progress will be recorded in the advancement of gender rights issues.

In order to progress as a nation, and protect women's rights they, we must re-examine facets of our cultural, socio-economic, and legal systems, which remain reticent on the challenges of women's rights. We must be ready to address structures that create contrasting principles for men and women. It is only when this is done, that we can begin to enjoy the dividends of gender equality in Nigeria.

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Ugandan teachers: paid so little for so much

by Tumusiime K. Deo

Introduction

The desire of any parent is for their children to have a prosperous future, usually defined by one's level of wealth that ultimately defines standard of life. The beginning block towards achieving this is to attain a good education. The quality of education that one experiences has a bearing later in one's life on the kind of acquaintances, and jobs they are able to vie for, as well as the benefits that accrue of them. The role of a teacher in this value chain, however discreet it may be, does not need to be emphasized. Therefore, a good education is pivotal in the fight against poverty both at individual, community and national levels. In fact, UNESCO has singled out Education as a major catalyst for human development, urging that rapid advances in education can help to achieve all of the MDGs (UNESCO, 2010).

Second-class citizens

Historically, teachers in Uganda, and notably at the primary school level, have long cried foul over poor pay. And while not being the only civil servants in a payment dilemma, teachers seem to be the worst hit by the deliberate or inadvertent virtual stratification of the Ugandan professional community. Teachers are perpetually seen as second- or perhaps third-class citizens, which, is plainly reflected in their remuneration. Interestingly, teachers' complaints over pay stretch all the way to university professors, notably from the country's oldest institution Makerere University. To compound the problem, one lecturer from Makerere University once lamented that the children he teaches are all thriving in different jobs while they (the lecturers) continue to graze meagerly on low pay. Some use this as a reason for throwing in the towel. One wonders how much more miserable the situation would be if primary teachers were to compare themselves with the professionals that have gone through their hands (New Vision Daily, 2012).

Despite this, teachers' contribution to the country overall, remains absolutely invaluable, for there can never be development without education. In an attempt to free themselves from this historical bind, teachers have launched occasional strikes over the years, with recent major national-level strikes taking place in 2011 and 2013. All have unfortunately been quashed by the government establishment under the pretext that there's no money. On each occasion, the teachers have been ordered back to class on pain of losing their jobs! Basing on E-mail interactions, officials from **The Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU)**. say the Union has registered close to 50 cases of harassment and victimization of teachers involved in these industrial actions, by Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) and Chief Administration Officers (CAOs).

The teachers' demands in the 2011 strike were as follows:

- Provide a 100% salary increase;
- Swiftly operationalize the Public Service Negotiating and Disputes Settlement Act that allows Public Service Unions to formally negotiate with Government;
- Ensure payment of hard-to-reach teachers and science teachers' allowances;
- Ensure timely remittance of capitation grants; and
- Implement the teachers' scheme of service (promotional ladders)

Negotiations during the 2011 strike resulted in an agreement by which the government pledged to give teachers a 50% increment phased in over three years in the following manner: 15% in 2012/13; 20% in 2013/14; and 15% in 2014-15. The government honoured the salary increment of 15% in 2012/13, but the 20% increment for 2013/14 was not even budgeted for, thus fueling the 2013 industrial action. Since then the situation has remained dire as the teachers' salaries were already well below minimum acceptable living standards (Education International 2012).

In spite of the teachers' troubles, the government has notoriously been reported seeking supplementary funding in billions of shillings for other sectors, notably defence, the Electoral Commission, roads, and parliament, among

others. In the 2014/15 Budget for example, while the Defence sector comfortably got allocated about a Trillion Shillings, the Education sector was allocated only 1.699 Billion amidst all its challenges. Without undermining the importance of such sectors, the continued availability of funding for them, and not the teachers, raises serious questions about the willingness of the government to address the teachers' plight. And without a doubt, it's this situation that has fueled the continued animosity of teachers against the government.

Can schools attract the brightest with poor pay?

Education is a complex field that deserves to be adequate addressed in order to achieve the ultimate goal. The United Nations at the turn of the Millennium came up with brilliant goals, among which was access to Universal Primary Education. However, in Uganda this has been remotely used as a political gimmick with little to show of the benefits of the education offered (Ritchie, 2012). As such, there is an important need for planners to examine education in a holistic manner; streaming from the quality of the school environment, such as good classrooms, provision of learning materials like text books, to obviously the quality of teachers. Unless the mismatch of these values is addressed, it becomes difficult for any school to attract the best candidates for teachers, in order to rip the most from the education they offer.

To address marginalization, we must help our children to learn and be beneficial to mother Uganda. To do this, we need to attract the crème de la crème to the teaching profession. One imagines that with the best kind of teachers, you can expect the best student performance—and not the thousands of failures we have witnessed in recent times. In my personal view, Ugandan teachers are not motivated enough to give their best, and with the situation as it stands it's nearly impossible to attract the best brains into the teaching profession as many bright youngsters would never want to risk their future. The few that join teaching simply do so as a last resort and with little commitment.

On average, a Ugandan primary teacher earns about Shs 300,000 per month (approximately 120 USD), a figure hopelessly insufficient for the ever-increasing cost of living in the country. What this means is that such teachers cannot afford a decent quality of life. Their situation is further worsened as even the little due to them sometimes is not remitted on time. Naturally, the teachers are forced to seek additional work in private schools (where they would prefer to send their own children), and as they get overstretched, their efficiency takes a downward turn. Others venture into businesses unrelated to the teaching profession, which still further affects their ability to deliver. Most can only hold up for so long before being tempted away from teaching by greener pastures or, in certain circumstances, diverting their professional talent on other things that would afford them a more decent life.

At the end of the day, folks that join teacher training colleges are generally those that have failed to get into programs that could later guarantee them more decent pay (Bindhe, 2014). Either they have no private sponsorship at the university or they did not secure adequate marks for a government sponsorship for the program of their choice. It can be argued that teaching for many is a last resort. Ultimately, we increasingly have disgruntled teachers only appearing in class to justify that small monthly pay, which in government schools is guaranteed. Delays in salaries are frequent (Bakalu, 2014).

But it helps to remain employed. Of course, this must in no way be interpreted as diminishing some of our gallant heroes who have offered their very best in the unwavering hope of their situation miraculously changing someday —it's on these that any glimmer of success is hinged.

Getting results?

Uganda may get credit for embracing the second Millennium Development Goal, having achieved Universal Primary Education—and indeed it has made progress in so far as offering free education is concerned. Statistics indicate that enrollment has increased from about 2.2 million children in 1997 to over 7 million today. Statistically, this is quite a significant shift, but numbers alone do not tell the whole story because the performance levels are so low. A 2012 report by the organization Uwezo suggests that only one out of 10 children in Primary 3 is able to comprehend Primary 2 level literacy and numeracy, an indication that children are merely passed from one class to another half-educated. The situation is no different at other levels (Uwezo, 2013).

The 2013 Primary Leaving Examination results indicated that 60,000 failures and at least 5,000 schools did not register a student in First Grade. These are 60,000 Ugandan children that have wasted away seven valuable years of their life in school and seen it all blown away like so much smoke!

The education minister should have launched an investigation to establish tangible solutions to the failure rates. It doesn't take consultants from the U.K. to identify the problem within the education system in Uganda. One cannot blame the teachers, because they could perform far better if they had the enabling environment, of which a living wage is a critical ingredient. I expected the Honourable Minister of Education Jessica Alupo for example to apologize to the nation or even resign upon being handed the 2013 Primary Leaving Exams (PLE) (Kagoba, 2012).

Perhaps what a more beneficial education must aim to achieve is to provide an all-round exposure that does not limit graduates to a single area of knowledge that could limit their involvement in the workplace.

Teachers are mis-proportionally blamed for the failings of their students. Yet they are hardly provided with the minimum environment to do their work. I have been to a few schools and seen teachers wearing worn-out shirts and torn jackets, with the soles of their shoes pointed in opposite directions. I have watched news of children in this day and age studying under trees or being taught while seated on bare dusty floor (Tumusiime, 2012). I have known teachers taking loans and living miserably while struggling to repay them. I have seen teachers who cannot afford to pay for their children in the very schools where they teach. I have seen teachers living in shacks and surviving on school posho (cooked maize) for a day's meal. One teacher I know of was working in a government school and was transferred from one district to another; she left her husband's nice home to start living in dilapidated staff quarters with a dirt floor, and yet she could not reject the transfer. With all this happening, the teaching profession becomes something very like a torture chamber. And with the situation like this, how many young and energetic Ugandans would want teaching as their profession of choice?

I undertook to find out from the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU), the umbrella organization for teachers across the country, to establish just why teachers have perpetually remained underpaid. UNATU says, "Government insists that teachers are too many and therefore increasing their salary to acceptable levels would be unmanageable, and would also cause a demand for similar increments for civil servants in the same pay level e.g. Police and nurses. Teachers are many because of the increasing enrolment that is close to 10 million learners in UPE alone. In fact, there is a shortage of teachers because Teacher-Pupil Ratios are as high as 1:114 in some Districts. Of course, issues such as wage bill limits set as conditions for aid by IMF and World Bank also come into play" (personal correspondence, 2014). UNATU is happy though that the Collective Bargaining Act, one of the striking teachers' demands, has been partly implemented, with Public Service Unions in 2013 signing Recognition Agreements. UNATU is also officially part of the National Negotiation and Consultative Council and hopes that this is an important step towards finding a lasting remedy.

In my opinion, the biggest reason why Ugandan teachers are not giving their best to educate the children is well known and has been the same over the years: poor remuneration (Walubiri, 2012). It is far more challenging for a hungry teacher to impart knowledge to their students. For some, it may be easy to conclude that the 60,000 children that failed exams were stupid in the head, but that would be merely escapist and deeply in