

News and Events

Jesuit Hakimani Centre workshops in September 2010

Group Work on positive ethnicity

Jesuit Hakimani Centre (JHC) facilitated a three-day workshop at the Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations, Hekima College on 9th, 10th and 13th September attended by about ninety youth groups drawn from Korogocho, Mathare and Kibera. The workshop on Positive ethnicity served as a channel to demystify ethnic stereotypes, identify positive traditional values and harmonise them with public/national values. JHC staff members were the facilitators for the workshop. Each day, about 30 youth (10 from each location) were trained.

It is expected that the training will help the youth in appreciating peaceful co-existence in multi-ethnic residential areas especially in Nairobi and slum dwellings within the city.



Youth in a group discussion at Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations, Hekima College.

Theatre in conflict transformation and peer mediation

The one-day workshop on Theatre in conflict transformation and peer mediation was held at the Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations on 29th September. The workshop was intended to equip the youth with key basic life skills, conflict resolution, peer mediation and healthy life styles that will keep them out of organised militia groups that their adherents are drawn mainly from informal settlements and slums. For the last four years, JHC has

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together with a group of select youths, worked in Nairobi's slum areas, gathering information on income and expenditure lines in these informal settlements. The information is published annually as the Nairobi Basic Needs Basket Survey the cost of a Basic Needs Basket in 16 informal settlements. Through collaboration with these groups of youths, (all of them living in the informal settlements)

JHC has identified the critical areas of need and possible ways of tackling them. At the moment, our main focus is on conflict transformation and peer mediation. The workshop was, therefore, meant to bring the youth together so that they could employ theatre as a means of enhancing conflict transformation and peer mediation strategies for promoting peaceful means of solving conflicts in communities. At the end of the workshop, each youth group came up with skits that were supposed to help them develop theatre that would be employed in spreading the message of peace in communities. In the next few weeks, JHC and the youth will host public shows and gatherings in communities in which the youth will perform in theatre in order to educate the public on conflict transformation and peer mediation. The forum will also be an opportunity to encourage the youth to get more involved in productive activities and to shun militia groups.

Mensen met een Missie (MM) meeting in Kisii

Mensen met een Missie (MM-People in a Mission) is a Dutch-based organization committed to interna-

tional cooperation from the Catholic missionary tradition. MM tries to work on a world of justice and peace and contribute to changing power relations in favour of the marginalized in the developing world. MM fulfills its objective by strengthening the power of faith-based organizations in the South that are engaged in working peacefully for social justice. In Kenya, MM mainly works on peace and reconciliation. The programme falls under two sections: Political Democratization and Inter-Religious Dialogue.

MM and its partner organizations in Kenya normally hold partner meetings twice a year to share experiences and ideas and deliberate on how the organizations could work together to realize their objectives in bringing sustainable peace and justice for all citizens in the country. This time the meeting was held at St. Vincent Catholic Pastoral Centre in Kisii from the 26th September to 1st October 2010 and was attended by partner organizations such as Chemchemi ya Ukweli; Catholic Justice and Peace, Kisii; Tangaza College; Catholic Peace and Justice, Malindi; Jesuit Hakimani Centre (represented by Pat Sakali); St. Martin Catholic Apostolate; Amani Peoples Theatre; Africa Peace Point; Kitale Aids Programme; Pastoral Centre Marsabit; and Africa Refugee Programme (Great Lakes) among others. The MM contact from The Netherlands, Kees Schilder also attended the meeting.

New wine in old wineskins: Statesmanshipⁱ in constitutionalism

Joseph Thomas Mboya S.J.

According to a 1999 paper by Commonwealth Africa, a constitution is described as more than just a set of rules or laws to regulate and limit state power. A constitution is “an expression of the general will of a nation; the sum total of its history, fears, concerns, aspirations, vision, and indeed the soul of the nation”ⁱⁱ. The Republic of Kenya has achieved a milestone in its political development under multiparty democracy by enacting of a new supreme law in August this year. The hopes and aspirations of Kenyan citizens that the new constitution has the power to change their lives are manifested by the high voter turnout at the August plebiscite as well as the optimism that greeted the process. The constitution is also viewed as a tool for healing the wounds of the past. This important phase of constitutionalism now shifts to the second and most important phase, that of implementation. It is imperative that this phase is handled with utmost seriousness and sincerity despite the fact that the process of constitutionalism has been a long and tiring affair. It demands that the Kenyan legislators outdo themselves and behave more as statespersons rather than politicizing the implementation process for their own gains.

“A statesman is a politician who places himself at the service of the nation. A politician is a statesman who places the nation at his service.” Politicians often think of the “here and now”ⁱⁱⁱ while statespersons think of the next generations. For any process of constitutionalism to be meaningful, what is needed is more of statesmanship. A statesperson is one who is a respected impartial senior male or woman politician, who is widely respected for integrity and impartial concern for the public good. As much as some of them may have been hard done by the failure to exhaustively reach a compromise on contentious clauses, this should not be the time to play dangerous political games in parliament but rather a moment for nation-building and cohesiveness. Likewise, for the citizens, constitutionalism does not end in casting one’s vote at the referendum but is a continuous participatory process that demands that they keep informed with the progress of the parliamentarians in enacting pieces of legislation necessary for the effective implementation of

the new supreme law. Citizens must continuously air out their views through various mediums as well as take an active part through the civil society which comprises NGOs, faith based organizations, community based organizations, professional associations, trade unions and the media among others. The process of constitutionalism must ensure that social and economic justice is achieved for all the citizens.

The need for selfless leaders of integrity

In the Bible, Jesus cautions against putting new wine into old wineskins (Luke 5:37-38). The result is that the new wine will burst the old wineskins and both the wine and the skins will be lost. New wine in new wineskins is the prophetic advice that Jesus offers. I liken the new constitution to new wine and some of the Kenyan politicians to the old wineskins. Hardly had the constitution been promulgated than the politicians started re-aligning themselves and strategizing at how they could capture the new positions of senators and governors. The prospect of restructuring the provincial administration is already causing panic among the current provincial administrators (Provincial Commissioners, District Commissioners, District Officers, Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs) who are now attempting to bargain for new offices in the new constitutional dispensation. Ironically, key leaders in the Grand Coalition Government keep on giving conflicting interpretations on the restructuring of the provincial administration (Sixth Schedule, No. 17). Likewise, the Chief Justice and the Attorney General who are required to vacate office within six months and one year respectively after the promulgation of the new constitution seem to be coming up with excuses in order to lengthen their stay in their respective offices (Sixth Schedule, Nos 24 and 31(7)).

It will be a great injustice if some of the ‘tainted’ leaders who have been used to the status quo of the old order still harbor ambitions to continue holding public offices in new constitutional dispensation especially after the 2012 general elections. This would lead to a scenario of the same cast but different script. The increase in the numbers of constituencies seems to serve this purpose to their ends as a number of those who had perennially lost elections in the past resurface to claim a share of these positions. Some of them are well known for major financial scandals in the past. It is up to the voters to ensure that they elect the right persons to the next Parliament (National Assembly and the Senate), governorship and other elective positions. Recycling the same brand

of leaders who have been in the politics for decades would be tantamount to supporting a continuation of the same unjust practices of the past. Therefore, it is important that civic education is prioritized to sensitize citizens on issues of social justice, good governance, integral leadership and the like. For the process of constitutionalism to be realized effectively, it is my opinion that a breed of politicians who have served in as many as Kenya's three regimes pave way for a new generation of leaders. They are like the biblical Moses, who led the Israelites to the promised land of Canaan but did not enter himself but handed over to the younger Joshua. In the same way America's founding fathers, in designing America's constitution, came up with a document that would stand the test of time for subsequent generations because they had in mind the future of the nation in the hands of their children and their children's children.

Some of the Kenyan leaders should hold their heads high and take their place in history, act as statespersons and pass the baton to a new generation of leaders with fresh ideas. As more women prepare to take up at least one third of the legislative seats, we offer them our support and encourage them to rise up to the challenge of playing a critical role in public office as equal partners with their male counterparts.

The major problem with many constitutions in Africa is not that of deficiency but rather the unwillingness of many leaders to adhere to the said constitutions. Constitutions are often amended to suit those

in power and protect their interests. Such an approach leads to constitutions that remain merely as legislative documents without goodwill from leaders to implement the laws. Will the Kenyan legislators prove to be statesmen and stateswomen? That remains to be seen. I echo the words of His Holiness Benedict XVI and the Bishops of Africa with their message of the Second African synod, "Courage! Get on your feet continent of Africa." This is a message for the Kingdom of freedom and peace for all. Any constitution, if it will be worth its salt, must be a tool for freedom and a source of peace in the polity.

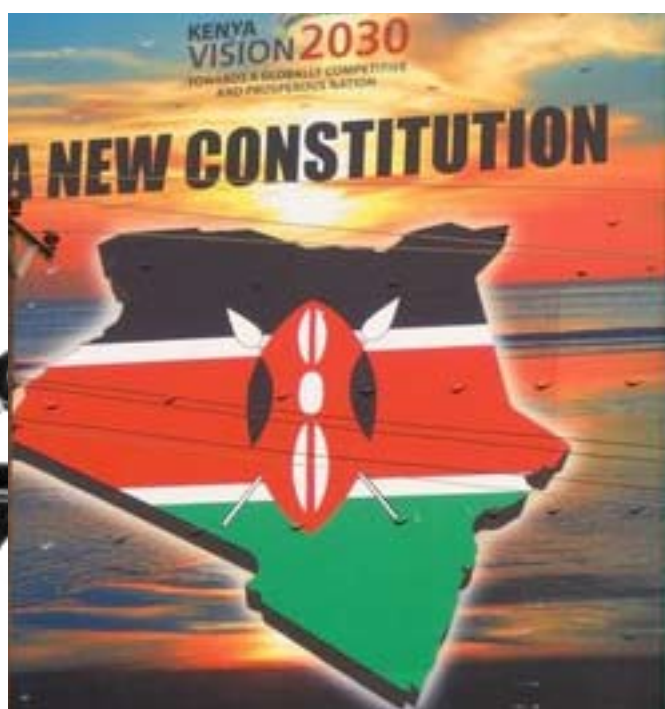
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Endnotes

ⁱHere I use the term statesman, not as a word that is gender insensitive, but more for its meaning and lack of a better term. Further in the article I use the terms stateswomen as well statespersons.

ⁱⁱThis document was a background paper on Commonwealth Africa to CHOGM on 19th October, 1999. It was titled "Promoting a Culture of Constitutionalism and Democracy in Commonwealth Africa." (2).

ⁱⁱⁱThis statement was made by French president, Georges Pompidou (1911 - 1974), and was quoted as the 'Sayings of the Year' by The Observer (London).



Of what significance is World Habitat Day?

Paul Odhiambo

“In development programmes, the principle of the centrality of the human person... must be preserved. The principal concern must be to improve the actual living conditions of the people in a given region...”

Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth)

On Monday October 4, the international community observed World Habitat Day. The United Nations has designated first Monday of October every year as World Habitat Day. The main objective of this global observance is to reflect on the basic right to adequate shelter for all in towns and cities. It is also a moment to reflect on the state of towns and cities where over a half of humanity live today. The World Habitat Day is also an opportunity to remind the international community of its collective responsibility for the future of the human habitat. The United Nations has an agency called the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (popularly known as UN-HABITAT) that is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all people.

The theme of this year's World Habitat Day is: “Better city, Better life.” Why is the UN concerned about the right to adequate shelter for all in urban areas? In 1950, only 17.8% of the population of developing world societies lived in towns and cities. By the end of the twentieth century, over 40% of the population in the South was living in urban areas. It is estimated that by the year 2030, almost 60% of developing world populations will be living in towns and cities. Rural-urban migration has contributed to explosion of urban population as many people move to cities in search of employment, business opportunities and better services. Life in towns and cities allows individuals to access better education facilities that may not be available in rural areas. Most universities, tertiary colleges, and a good number of learning institutions are situated in urban areas. Many people also migrate to towns in the hope of accessing better health care, entertainment facilities and other social amenities.



A residential house in Runda estate, Nairobi

Due to rapid urbanization in developing countries, there are concerns that the challenges of urban life are contributing to many people living in inhumane conditions especially in informal settlements where they are unable to access adequate housing, health care, clean water, education, electricity, sanitation and other

social amenities. Life in deplorable habitat undermines human dignity of slum/shanty dwellers as they are exposed to diseases, insecurity, pollution, poor garbage disposal, insecurity of tenure, poor housing facilities and other socio-economic deprivations and social ills. The plight of informal settlement dwellers living in life-threatening conditions is further exacerbated by frequent violations of their rights and fundamental freedoms by central governments and city/municipal council authorities. Moreover, criminals also aggravate residents' civil liberties due to little or none presence of public security services in the informal settlements. In some cases, militias form a "quasi-government" in charge of security, electricity and water supply, garbage collection in slums. Many a time robbery with violence, forced evictions, different forms of violence, rape cases, drug trade and addiction, and alcoholism are rampant in these suburbs. Due to socio-economic hardships in these areas, youth in slums are more vulnerable to human traffickers and drug dealers. During election campaigns, some politicians hire the youth from these informal settlements to intimidate their political rivals. Today, the number of slum dwellers around the world stands at about one billion. Majority of those who live in slums are faced with abject poverty due to lack of jobs and economic opportunities.



Kibera slum in Nairobi

As the world continues to urbanize, questions are being raised on the sustainability of towns and cities amidst myriads of problems facing the poor who are at the fringe of urban civilization. In *Octogesima Adveniens* (On New Social Problems, 1971), Pope Paul VI warned humanity that the city would soon be a habitat of inequalities where fraternal encounter and mutual aid are undermined as cities become habitats fostering discrimination, exploitation, domination, abuse of drugs, delinquency and indifference to the plight of the poor among others. The Pontiff observed that the weakest were victims of dehumanizing living conditions, degrading for conscience and harmful for the family institution. The young people in such environment are affected due to various deprivations. The Holy Father urged those who are responsible to ensure that the process of urbanization is given direction and controlled.

In East Africa, a sizeable number of people live in urban areas today. It is expected that more people will reside in towns and cities in the coming years as urbanization takes root in the region. While considerable progress is going on to make our urban areas more habitable, the proliferation of informal settlements is already a big headache to national governments, civil/municipal council governors and policy makers. Low earners often live in informal settlements where there is inadequate shelter, poor sanitation and garbage disposal, limited or lack of social services, scarce water resources and poor electricity supply. Moreover, informal settlements are prone to outbreak of contagious diseases especially during rainy season. Poor physical infrastructure in informal settlements undermines human development as residents often face insurmountable difficulties when they engage in productive activities.

In order for our towns and cities to be more habitable, there is a need for proper planning for towns and cities. The national governments should ensure that there are affordable housing so that low income earners can also live in better and humane conditions where social services and basic needs such as health care, education, clean water, electricity and other social amenities are available and affordable. This calls for participatory urban governance and proper utilization of resources for the common good of all urban residents. Provision of fair remunerations to workers is necessary so they are able to afford adequate shelter and basic needs of life. The government must ensure that the rights of wage-earners are protected. As Pope Leo XIII observed in his Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* (On the Conditions of Workers, No. 54), the poor and the badly off need special consideration in the society.

In our urban areas today, thousands of workers who are exploited by large firms and corporations who pay majority of workers peanuts. Under such conditions, it is unlikely that they will meet their obligations of catering adequately for their families. As a result many opt to live in cheap house in order to continue earning the meagre salaries. As we reflect on the World Habitat Day's theme of "Better city, Better life" for this year, it is important to interrogate whether the development programmes and poverty reduction strategies in our countries and the region at large are meeting the expectations of the common citizens at the grassroots especially those who live in informal settlements in our urban areas. I conclude with emphatic words of Pope Paul VI: "Development demands bold transformations, innovations that go deep" (*Populorum Progressio - On the Development of Peoples*, No. 32). This is a challenge to public authorities, the international community, other stakeholders and each one of us!

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Poverty and Poverty Alleviation in Kenya

Mugo Phares Kirii

The first decade after Kenya's independence was one of remarkable growth and structural change, with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growing by 7 percent to 8 percent per year. Agriculture and manufacturing growth – combined with the growing productivity of small farms areas, rural employment expansion, and major redistributive (and probably productive) impacts of land reforms in the early post independence period – brought about a reduction in poverty. Between 1973 and 1980, the situation deteriorated, partly as a result of the raising price of oil and other imports; the declining availability of extra high-quality land alongside rapid population growth; the drift of land towards the better –off; and the absence of sustained agro- technical process. Matters continued to worsen between 1980 and 1985, especially after a severe drought in 1984. From the mid 1970s, cultivated land area expansion slowed down. In 1986, the government launched a structural adjustment programme, which seemed to benefit the economy, as economic growth averaged 6 percent per year between 1986 and 1990. Cut between 1990 and 1993 the economic situation worsened again and GDP growth fell; since then the economy has recovered.

Kenya has been the subject of much social and economic analysis since independence, and has a well developed statistical information system. Despite this abundance of statistical material, relatively few studies relating poverty and socioeconomic indicators at the national level, covering the 1980s to date have been undertaken. Although the incidence of urban poverty has decreased slightly in Kenya by 10 percent extreme poverty and poverty depth has increased. Although the economy recovered after 2002, sustained economic growth has not been strong enough to have a big impact on poverty. Poverty must have been worsened by the impact of the growing workforce and unequal distribution of incomes. Poverty research and policy recommendations

The World Bank's own review statistical findings and assessment provide useful information as entry points to policy dialogue. However two shortcomings, relevant for this paper, are human resource development and social safety nets to poverty reduction – such as analyses of the targeting to the poor social spending – than they do about the con-

tribution of labour-intensive growth. Second, poverty assessments are thought to contain too few operationally relevant findings and recommendations. Institutional strategies for poverty reduction are not covered. A similar conclusion pertains to the participatory poverty assessment as Norton et al., 1995). Although these provide insights poor's perceptions of poverty, vulnerability and policy priorities, they do not give information about policies: why, for example, education systems do not reach and benefit more poor people, or how this system can be improved. We argue therefore that the CBS provides us with more information about the state of poverty than about what can be done to reduce it, and particularly about how this should be done.

Economic growth and poverty

For a long time, it was quite generally assumed – following Kuznets – that with initial economic growth (the take off) inequality would increase, and therefore poverty reduction would lag behind. Building on vastly improved household consumption data for an increasingly large number of countries (Deininger and Squire, 1996a), new evidence shows that this is not necessarily true.

The 1990 World Development Report was one of the first publications to suggest that Kuznets was “wrong”. This indicates that during the periods of long-run growth the observed poverty reduction was not much different from the poverty reduction according to a simulation where inequality was held constant. This picture is a slightly different for periods of recession, but not much, and the general observation that economic growth was not accompanied by raising inequality holds.

Ravallion and Chen (1996), using new internationally comparable poverty data, have made a comparable point. They regress changes in surveyed poverty incidence in 42 developing countries against changes mean surveyed consumption (not GDP/GNP), showing a strong positive association between rates of growth in average standards of living and reduction of poverty, and concluding that growth in the mean usually benefits the poor.

Bruno, Ravallion and Squire (1996) confirm the growth-poverty reduction link with their findings - from a carefully constructed internationally comparable data set covering four decades – that the Gini Coefficient changes little over time. The variation in inequality across coun-

tries is greater than the variation over time; over time, no systematic pattern could be discovered.

Whereas the evidence given above focuses on the chain of causation from growth to poverty and inequality, there is also some evidence of reverse causation. It has been argued that the rapid growth in East Asia (and in global cross – country regressions) has been associated with prior spread of access to education and land.

This literature on the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction no doubt confirms the importance of economic growth for poverty reduction. Also, the evidence suggesting possible damaging effects of inequality (especially of land ownership and among regions) on growth is encouraging for those wanting to address poverty and inequality: there may be way to reduce inequality without damaging economic growth. But it is obviously not the whole story. First, as noted, “the poor” are not a homogeneous group, and there are where the poorest have not benefited from economic growth. This calls for specific policy attention. Second, if economic growth rates explain 50 percent of the variation in poverty incidences – as most studies suggest – 50 percent is still unexplained, which may indicate the large margin where policies (other than growth enhancing policies) can make a difference. Moreover, the literature on inequality stresses that there is no discernible trend in changes in inequality over time, but it also shows that there are large variations among countries, which – again are unexplained.

Policies for poverty alleviation

In this last section we discuss some of the literature on poverty alleviation policies. We first discuss human capital development, the consensus that the provision of education and health are essential both for economic development and poverty alleviation. Second, we look at the recent debates about social capital.

Human capital

The 1990 world Development Report’s two part strategy has become an almost undisputed paradigm in development discussions: “rapid and politically sustainable progress of poverty has been achieved by pursuing a strategy that has two equally important elements. The first element is to promote the productive use of the poor’s most abundant asset – labour... the second is to provide basic social services to the poor. Primary health care, family planning, nutrition and primary education are especially important” This “instrumental” vision of human capital formation

is not shared in all analyses. Perhaps most explicitly in the UNDP’s Human Development Report, improving education and health are seen as goals in themselves, not just means to achieving something else. Particularly their latest index, the human poverty index, which excludes a measure of income, indicates the priority of human development over economic growth

Social Capital

Since the early 1990s, the concept of social capital has rapidly entered into development and poverty debates. Social capital refers to “the informal rules, norms and long-term relationships that facilitate co-ordinated action and enable people to undertake co-operative ventures for mutual advantage” (ibid.). The notion is usually associated with Putnam’s (1993) analysis of the differences between northern and southern Italy in forms of networks and civic engagement, and the way this affects economic growth. His analysis suggests that groups or regions with greater degrees of horizontal connections and more voluntary associations have more efficacious governments.

The social capital index of a location is measured by the surveys respondents’ membership in groups, the characteristics of these groups (in terms of heterogeneity, inclusiveness and group functioning), and the individuals’ values and attitudes, particularly the expresses trust and perception of social cohesion. This index is strongly associated with higher expenditure per person in each household (but not with the degree of inequality among households). However, this does not tell us whether some outside factor causes both. Its is quite plausible that a “cushion” of income increases people’s willingness to allocate time and trust to “horizontal associations” such as farmers’ clubs, so that growth causes social capital, rather than vice versa.

However, the discussion on social capital supports a point often made in analyses of, e.g., development projects and participation, that the outcomes of intervention improve with support from the people involved. For example, school quality will be enhanced if parents can organize to monitor and press authorities to maintain or improve schools. The added value of the recent discussions, which have only begun, is that the argument is brought into a theoretical form, and has been applied in statistical analyses.

Perhaps the main difficulty, as indicated, is the question of causality: does social capital improve economic (and other) performance, or is it the other way around? Narayan and Pritchett (1997) try to

take account of this through an instrumental viable, but this is not wholly convincing. Even if social capital is indeed a casual factor, the question remains whether “social capital” can be enhanced, that is, whether it is amendable to policy intervention. There is a tendency in some of the literature to treat social capital as similar to other sorts of capital, which, by implication, would mean that its stock could be increased by outside intervention. Social capital, though, has a much more embedded nature, and can much less easily be enhanced. At least two sorts of related questions could be asked in the context of this paper. First, how does social capital relate to good government, or to improving government? From Putnam’s analysis it follows that social capital will help. But, as indicated in discussions about decentralization, this bears little promise for poor, far removed communi-

ties, with sparse networks, in developing countries.

Second, the notion of social capital pays little attention to exclusion, to those people who are deprived of social capital. Most seriously, the poorest are likely to suffer from multiple forms of disadvantages, and these are likely to be in groups that have not profited from the improvements experienced in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), that is, those possessing few physical assets or social capital, belonging to minority ethnic, religious or linguistic groups, having bad health and little education, and living in generally deprived areas without adequate infrastructure.

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Empowered and responsible citizens key to reconstruction of South Sudan

Titus Pacho, S.J.

“... so that they may have life and have it more abundantly,” Jn 10: 10b

Abstract

This article explores the need for honest empowerment as an effective tool in the reconstruction of South Sudan, especially given that the country is in the process of self-determination. The article suggests that empowerment of citizens for active and responsible participation in socio-economic and political spheres is a useful approach in developing responsible citizens who are more proactive in bringing about beneficial change for the common good. It focuses on some of the challenges facing South Sudan and recommends some possible ways of addressing and transforming the country's problems for the betterment of the society. It emphasises on building a nation which is even more challenging than attaining self-rule.

Introduction

South Sudan is a region just recovering from more than two decades of civil war. As a result, it is facing a number of challenges which includes poverty, illiteracy, dependency syndrome, corruption, HIV/AIDS, ignorance of rights and duties, conflict and political instability. These make empowerment and taking responsibility particularly very important for bringing about the change needed to successfully tackle the numerous socio-economic and political challenges facing the region.

Challenges

Poverty: Many countries in Africa including the semi-autonomous South Sudan are endowed with rich and diverse natural resources such as oil as well as fertile soils and good climate for agricultural production. Yet a paradox is that some of our countries are among the poorest in the world, where people still die from hunger, preventable and curable diseases such as cholera and malaria. Many people cannot access basic necessities of life such as food, clean water, shelter; and essential services like security, education and health care. These services should be guaranteed by empowering people to be

more creative and by providing an enabling environment partly to help people exercise their creativity. Basic-needs security and provision of affordable essential services is a first step for any developmental endeavour. This is so because hungry, sick, insecure and illiterate citizens cannot participate actively in nation-building and other development processes.

Dependency syndrome: South Sudan like many African countries depends heavily on foreign aid. However, it is important to note that this aid cannot provide the people with adequate infrastructure, housing, food, education, and medical care. Although external assistance may be useful in promoting development, it should not be overemphasised as it may encourage over-dependency. Prolonged dependency on external assistance undermines people's creative capacities and responsibility. Moreover, a hand that receives tends to be under a hand that gives.

Corruption: Corruption has become a “cancerous” growth in many African countries and South Sudan is not an exemption. It has seen proceeds from natural resources and revenue from taxation being diverted to serve a few individuals at the detriment of many instead of developing common goods such as education, health care and infrastructure. Is there anything in our societies that encourages corrupt citizens or gives people an impression that it pays to be corrupt? Maybe this would imply a need to change our ways of doing things, perhaps emphasising values of transparency, accountability, honesty and self-giving.

HIV/AIDS: HIV/AIDS has become one of the most devastating ailments affecting almost every sector of life in Africa. In fact, the late Dr. John Garang once rightly said, “after the war, AIDS is the biggest enemy.”¹ In addition to its taking many lives and causing much suffering, it has impacted negatively on socio-economic development in many African countries by undermining many efforts towards economic growth, poverty alleviation and better quality of life. Although a lot of information about HIV/AIDS has been disseminated in many regions in Africa, the overwhelming poor awareness of the disease among most people in Southern Sudan is a sad reality. Many South Sudan's population still deny the existence of this disease and consider it as foreign or view it as a myth. Such attitude makes these people very vulnerable. Thus, there is an urgent need to honestly raise the level of HIV/AIDS awareness among our people of South Sudan. This may

lead to changes in attitude and behaviour in an effort to combat the spread and effects of the pandemic.

Ignorance of rights and duties: Pope Benedict XVI underscores the importance of giving equal weight to both rights and duties. In his encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, he asserts that “duties set a limit on rights [...] thereby reinforce rights and call upon for their defence and promotion as a task to be undertaken in the service of the common good.”² Yet, many citizens of South Sudan are not aware or educated about their fundamental rights and duties. But it may prove difficult to defend and promote human rights and duties if they are not known. But, they cannot be known unless they are explained and understood. This calls for human rights empowerment in an effort to raising the level of human rights’ awareness in this region. While many countries in Africa have ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) thereby recognising the universality, indivisibility, and inalienability of the rights of all people as the foundation for equality, freedom, justice and peace, it is unfortunate that human rights violations and crimes against humanity continue to escalate in South Sudan. The right to life, for instance, is a fundamental right that should be protected and promoted by all possible means, yet many lives continue to be lost indiscriminately. Is there respect for human dignity, rights and freedoms in our South Sudan?

Conflict and political instability: Peace is a key factor to development. However, it is sad that tribal violence continue unabated in some parts of South Sudan thereby slowing down development efforts. For instance, in June 21, 2009, more than 100 people were killed in the town of Nasir, when tribesmen raided a South Sudan village, burning buildings and attacking church goers, in a further escalation of violence in the oil-producing region³.

Reflecting on a number of ethnic attacks in South Sudan that has left scores of people dead and numerous property destroyed is regrettable. This is worrying particularly for a region which is just recovering from more than two decades of civil war and is in a process of attaining self-rule. And since there have been a number of such attacks in the past, all people of good will must be concerned; and especially, the government must bring this continuous destruction to a halt. The government must continue deploying more security forces in these areas to bring the perpetrators and instigators to justice and to protect the lives and property of many innocent civilians.

Chiefs who command a lot of respect from their people and have a lot of influence over their subjects must be involved in a fruitful dialogue with serious commitment to dissuade their people from engaging in acts which are in total disregard to human dignity.

Therefore, conflict-prevention strategies should be concerned largely with measures that seek to address the root-causes of conflict and instability such as poverty, injustices, exclusionist policies, authoritarian rule, human right abuses and corrupt institutions. These are some of the root-causes of conflict which have triggered civil wars and conflicts in many African countries.

In economic as well as in broader human terms, preventing conflicts at an early stage is advantageous compared to the cost of humanitarian intervention involved in actual conflict, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. Nevertheless, light intervention such as honest cross-party dialogues; private mediation, diplomatic bargaining, post-conflict peace building, national reconciliation and respect and promotion of human rights should not be ignored.

Various communities of Southern Sudan must learn to co-exist peacefully with their different neighbours. They should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood through sharing, for instance, some of the gifts of nature such as water and pasture in efforts to protecting and promoting human life for its own sake. Various churches, NGOs, the media, political leaders and community leaders who have been at the forefront at witnessing to values such as compassion, sharing and helping the underprivileged in the society should continue to do even more so that all the people may have life and have it more abundantly. This can consequently strengthen a feeling of an obligation to help others beyond one’s own immediate family, clan, tribe, nation or continent. We can borrow a leaf from former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda. In his Letter to My Children, Kaunda addressed his children in these words: “You will grow up to be not only citizens of Zambia and children of Africa but also people of the world struggling to find wholeness and unity.”⁴

The people of South Sudan must unite to realise the right to achieving self-determination. Yet, building a nation is even more challenging than attaining self-rule. But in doing so, they must be on the lookout for those who would want to use the tactics of divide and rule against them. They must be guided by uni-

ty of purpose. United we stand but divided we fall; this is especially true of South Sudan where many people are still divided on ethnic lines. To achieve the goals of self-rule and national development, the people must be driven by equity and inclusion rather than exclusion, division, hatred and selfishness. In the light of the above factors which are too big and their consequences too dire, the people of South Sudan cannot afford to be guided by false ideologies and irrelevant approaches. They must be empowered and sensitised regarding various problems that affect their livelihood and the relevant means of addressing them. But one thing is certain; cessation of conflict and provision of basic services such as food, water, shelter, security, health care, literacy, gender equity and children rights form the basic and lasting foundation of a South Sudan without armed conflict.

Empowerment

Empowerment is an active process whereby people grow in their capabilities. It is a role of a whole society to empower its members for active participation, particularly in the socio-economic and political spheres of life. With what and how should people be empowered? The focus should be on the human person who is endowed with capabilities to bring about change. When human capabilities are well developed and exercised through sound education in moral conduct and training in skills, individuals will be enabled to determine their own destiny and hence become active and responsible citizens.

The process of empowerment is multi-faceted. Firstly, empowerment involves helping people to change from passive and dependent citizens into freer, more independent, active and responsible citizens. Secondly, empowerment entails enabling citizens to understand that they have potential and power; and helping them to put these into active and productive use. Thirdly, empowerment implies acquiring skills and knowledge to enable a person to determine his or her own destiny. Finally, through access to relevant information, a person will confidently participate in decision-making processes that concern one's life and lives of others and hence become an active agent of beneficial change.

Various NGOs, churches, government and private institutions operating in South Sudan should empower the people by helping them to do things by themselves rather than being done for. The best way to teach a child is by showing him or her how to solve a problem but not by solving the problem for him or

her. What will you do when a woman asks you for fish? Yes, you may give her fish today, tomorrow ...; and she will keep on coming. Therefore, a better way to help her is to show her how to catch fish so that she can get her own fish and as a result help herself and others get their own fish. In such ways we can help our people become agents of change; people who can make informed decisions on socio-economic and political matters and also influence such decisions; people who can contribute actively to nation building and determine their own destiny. These can discourage dependency syndrome so that a person does not only ask what other people can do for him or her but also what he or she can do for himself/herself and for others and the society at large. Each and every citizen of South Sudan must play his or her role honestly and responsibly for the common good. It is through goodwill and collective responsibility that South Sudan will progress in the right direction.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this article by inviting the readers to reflect on the following questions and phrases:

- a) Am I part of the problem or part of the solution in South Sudan?
- b) "... ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Thus, what have I done in reconstructing South Sudan? What am I doing in reconstructing South Sudan? What will I do in reconstructing South Sudan?
- c) "... know that your people will judge you on what you can build, not what you destroy" and "... greatness is never a given. It must be earned."

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Endnotes

¹ Anthony Poggo, "HIV/AIDS: The New Enemy," Sudan Mirror, Friday June 23rd – Thursday July 6th 2006

² Benedict XVI, *Charity in Truth: On Integral Human Development*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009), p. 41.

³ <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LL61402.htm>,

⁴ Keneth Kaunda, *Letter to My Children*, (London: Longman, 1973), pp. 98-99.

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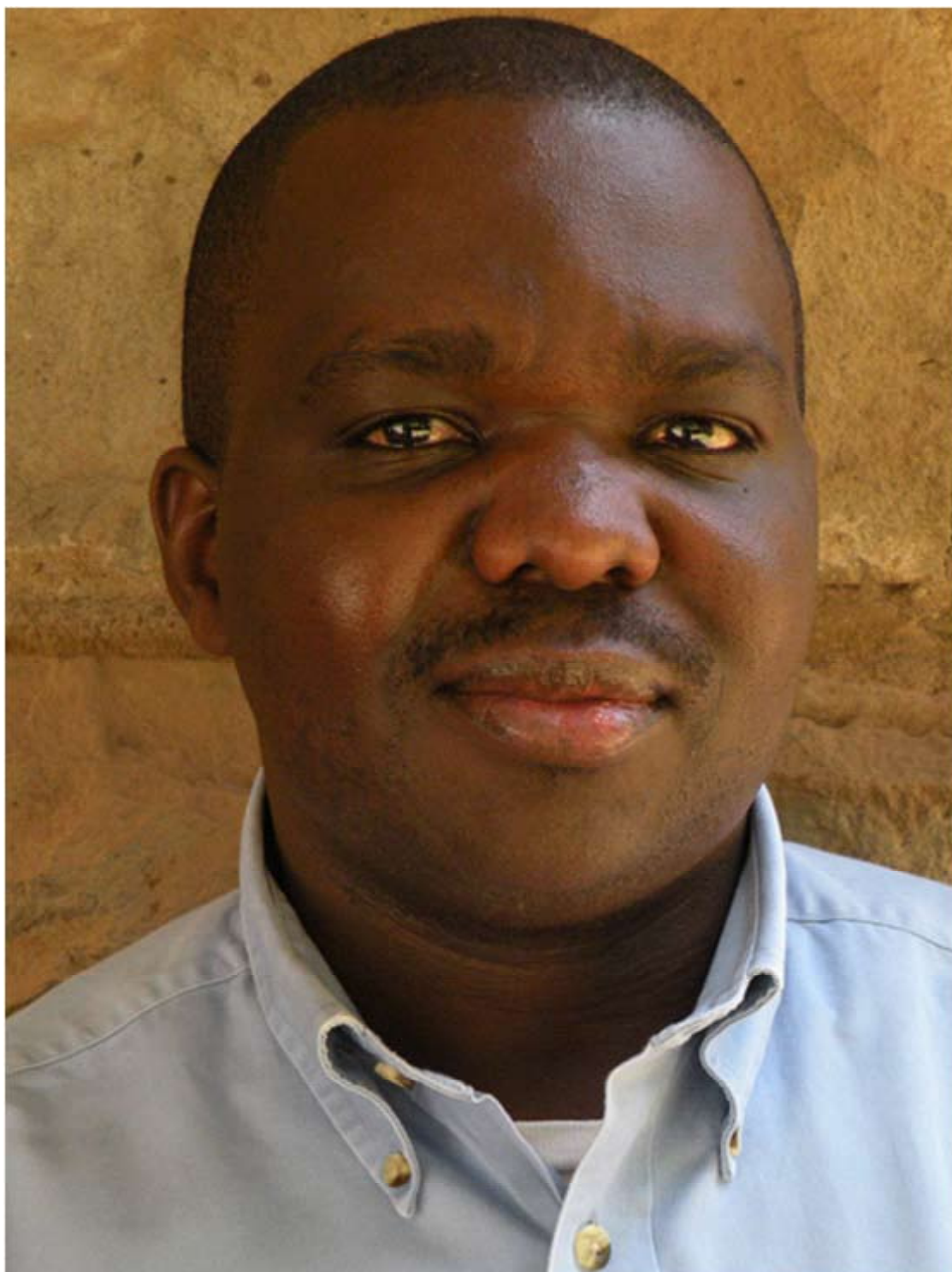
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Tribute to Padre Ignatius Ikunza, SJ

Fr Ignatius Ikunza Ayieko, SJ, the former Director of Jesuit Hakimani Centre, passed away on the 13th September, 2010 after a relative short battle with cancer. He was laid to rest at Campion Jesuit Centre, Weston, Massachusetts, USA on 17th September 2010. In Nairobi a requiem Mass for Fr Ikunza was celebrated on Saturday 18th September 2010 in the chapel of Hekima College. Fr. Ikunza was the Director of Jesuit Hakimani Centre between September 2008 and March 2010. As the Director of Hakimani, he was very passionate about the realization of just societal structures, civil liberties and good governance in the Eastern Africa region. Let us continue praying for the repose of Fr Ikunza's soul. May the Almighty God grant solace and peace to his family, relatives, friends and his companions in the Society of Jesus!



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Jesuit Hakimani Centre is the social justice, research and advocacy centre of the Eastern Africa Province of the Society of Jesus. The province comprises of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania.

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