

An Assessment of Harambee as an African Notion towards Social and Educational Development in Kenya

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ABSTRACT The short review on the Kenyan Harambee form of socialism in this paper describes various perspectives and reviews of previous research findings on Harambee. It contributes to the debates on its advantages, disadvantages and its civic engagement value for Kenyan society. The study was based on desktop research and necessitated the use of primary and secondary data, which was collected by means of an extensive literature review. The review made use of library databases of peer-reviewed journal papers and Kenyan government reports. The paper presents serious, intellectual and logical arguments about the theme. The paper notes and concludes that it was through education as a social value that underlie the achievements of Harambee. Thus, ethical engagement with education is considered vital for the sustainability of any nation, and thus the ethically sound harnessing of prevailing practicable societal structures is critical for success.

INTRODUCTION

African socialism was born out of the yearning of African leaders to generate a new society, unlike the colonial period societies, and Harambee was one form of this socialism, which embraced equity bereft of oppression, racism and a range of other social injustices. Harambee was thus a communitarian movement in Kenya, which was initially formally propagated by the first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, and this was immediately after Kenya attained political independence from Britain in 1963. In fact, it was Kenyatta from his early career when still an activist and later as director and principal of the Kenya African Teachers' College, which was managed by the independent schools' movement, who advocated improved quality education through the use of existing structures (Sikhakhane 2018). Kenyatta asserted during his inauguration speech, "*But you must know that Kenyatta alone cannot give you everything. All things we must do together to develop our country, to get education for our children, to have doctors, to build roads, to improve or provide all day-to-day essentials. I give you the call: Harambee Waithima*" (2012: 5).

Corrado (2022) sees education as playing a pivotal role in the success of Harambee. She interprets Harambee as a dialogical and dialogic injunc-

tion and pedagogy in the education of children particularly at elementary and secondary levels of schooling in Kenya. Having been influenced by the Brazilian critical pedagogy thinker and philosopher Paulo Freire, she argues that deeper learning occurs through dialogue particularly through the import of experiences learners bring into the formal education space. This approach has the effect of liberating learners, as they deem the classroom not as 'foreign' but as part of larger society. "Dialogic pedagogy is not seen as an end-state of learning, but an idea of developing practices towards goals where students can learn to develop agency through fostering a deeper level of interactions in their lessons" (Corrado 2022: 137). Practice or what Freire terms 'praxis' is an important concept, as it emphasises 'action upon reflection'. This kind of praxis is something that Corrado thinks the learners can export towards outside the classroom, towards the development of society in general. This is important, as it was always the main rationale of Harambee, the education of young people who in turn would contribute productively to society.

Harambee is a Kiswahili word meaning 'pulling together', and it appeals to a community drive of self-help amongst Kenyans (Ombudo 1986). It was in the aftermath of Kenya's independence that Kenyatta urged Kenyans to join and 'pull togeth-

er' to achieve socio-economic development under the banner of a sort of African socialism dubbed 'Harambee'. Kenyatta was of course pragmatic in this regard, as he was fully aware that Kenya did not have the luxury of large investment funds lying around to kickstart the economy and to drive social projects. It was thus for this reason that he brought together Kenyans with the vision and purpose to avail resources with the view to achieve social development. Because of what it represented for the country and what the project managed to achieve, Harambee also appears on the Kenyan coat-of-arms. As reported by Transparency International (TI) for Kenya (2001), under the leadership of the later Presidents Daniel Arap Moi and Mwai Kibaki the movement continued to rise to greater heights.

Daniel Moi stated that Harambee exemplifies notions of "mutual assistance, joint effort, mutual social responsibility and community self-reliance", and it was deemed to be an "informal development strategy of the people, by the people for the people" (Akong'a 1989: 30). As African states battled to increase their economic and social prosperity, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, this paved the way for increased Harambee initiatives in Kenya and these allowed the masses to take initiatives to fill the state void (Gibbon et al. 1992). Chieni (2001) further explains that Harambee was always in existence in some form or other as an indigenous notion, as "each Kenyan society had self-help or cooperative work groups by which groups of women on one hand and men on the other organised common work parties, for example to cultivate or build houses for each other, clear bushes and to harvest among other activities". In this regard, the good of the group was sought rather than individual enrichment. One had to care for others in society as well.

Although Kenya's experiment with socialism in the form of Harambee was brief in historical context, it nonetheless represented an important strand of thought among some anti-colonial thinkers, leaders and movements both on the continent and abroad. For instance, its emphasis on the values of self-reliance, community, brotherhood and sisterhood found resonance in the musings and socialist ideologies of such thinkers as Julius Nyerere and his concept of *ujamaa* across the border in Tanzania, (Nyerere 1968), Sedar Senghor and Steve Biko on black solidarity and the need for black

self-reliance (Biko 1978), Samir Amin and his decades long advocacy for Africa to 'delink' itself from the West (Amin 1990) amongst others. However, one of its greatest achievements and significance for the Third World was that instead of merely intellectualising about socialism, Kenya (and to some extent Tanzania) went even further and showed that an alternative to the global neo-liberal agenda was possible.

Initially, Harambee represented a drive by the working class, which was encouraged by the state to provide for themselves the much needed basic social services. The state was expected to deliver resources once the workers had established their own projects. Towards the end of Kenyatta's rule, Kenya was overcome by an explosion in the huge number of projects. Workers thus had to be rapidly demobilised as the government sought to plan more effectively (Kinyua 2020). Waiguru (2002) however contends that Harambee was not well coordinated at all by the government and there was thus a call for greater formal regulation and administration of Harambee dealings so as to safeguard projects. Such state support eventually manifested from the end of 2002.

In essence, a comprehensive national planning strategy was recognised as the best way to progress in economic development and needed social change after independence. In this strategy, there would be planning to direct the apportionment of scarce resources such as land, a skilled workforce, capital, and also needed foreign aid in order to encourage rapid growth in all the sectors of the economy for the benefit of all Kenyans (Ministry of Housing and Social Services 1967-1984). Harambee, being the indigenous tradition of self-help, would be used to marshal local resources and locals would be involved in most development initiatives in line with a United Nations 1951 report that was prepared by a cluster of experts who delineated the actions for the economic development of underdeveloped countries such as Kenya (United Nations 1951). This UN report highlighted national economic planning as a key consideration and called for transformation through which long-standing social institutions and older philosophies would be substituted by both modern institutions and the latest technologies. Harambee was based on the assumption that "the most effective way to address poverty is through wealth creation, which in turn is done by growing the economy in a sustainable, inclusive manner".

During President Daniel Arap Moi's tenure a song was sung, which enthused people with a sense of nationalism. It was, "*Harambee Harambee... tujenge serekali... Wananchi Harambee, tuvute pamoja*" (which means "All pull together, All pull together... Let's build the government... Citizens, all pull together, let's pull together") (Musau 2020). "Harambee self-help and fundraising events that were spread through word of mouth and local newspapers, and propped up with government start-up funds, helped to mobilise more than USD 55 million between 1963 and 1988" (AV Noreh cited in Musau 2020).

Harambee became fully espoused and represented a national spirit of social inclusivity and interconnection (Chieni 2001). Harambee projects were chiefly locally instigated and executed. It was however mainly the wealthy members of society that could contribute although the less materially able also participated where they could (Government of Kenya 1983; Republic of Kenya 1984).

Objectives

The study sets out to understand Kenya's experiment with socialism, which was dubbed 'Harambee'. It discusses various perspectives as well as reviews previous research findings on Harambee. Lastly it seeks to contribute to the debates on its advantages, disadvantages and its civic engagement value for Kenyan society.

METHODOLOGY

A literature research methodology was employed as the researchers read through, analysed and sort through literature in order to identify the essential attributes of Harambee and related aspects. The literature reviewed included books, scholarly papers, and online sources relevant to a particular issue and provided a description, summary, and critical evaluation of pertinent works in relation to the research problem investigated. The works were reviewed, critiqued, and representative literature on Harambee was then integrated in a way such that new perspectives on the topic were generated. Thus each work considered was placed in the context of its contribution to understanding the research problem.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout the first decade after independence (1963-1973), Harambee was the foremost instrument of development in Kenya, as it was positioned to be involved in an extensive variety of self-help structures from the grass-roots level right up to the utmost national level (Murage 2007). The key premise was the fight against ignorance, poverty and disease under the blueprint of African socialism and as such, it was a useful development strategy that mobilised the people at the grass-roots level to play a meaningful role in their own as well as regional development (Holmquist 1984). They were for the most part to be the generators of required resources such as labour and financial backing. Harambee also became a conduit for the state to distribute aid to citizens (Keller 1983). The general good and thus community advancement became the driver as opposed to any type of narcissistic endeavour. In this regard, all the stakeholders were included in any decision-making affecting a project in a particular area. All Harambee efforts were concerned with the production of basic needs in what was essentially a social exchange and assistance process (Mbithi and Rasmusson 1977).

Harambee served educational drives better than the case would have been without it, and led to development of education in Kenya through important fundraising to build needed schools and colleges, according to Orora and Spiegel (1979), and it distributed resources in a relatively equitable manner. Resources were also collected through Harambee efforts to expand infrastructural amenities, for example roads, power and water provision (Kitching 1980). Harambee promoted the collective involvement in development programmes of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and it also thus promoted national unity, helped to define group identity, a strong work ethic, and nurtured moral values through collective ethical practices, which invariably attracted international donors (Bailey 1993).

Corrado (2022) observes that although Harambee was successful in a number of fronts, there were those individuals however, that sought to take advantage of the system by extorting money from community members. According to Ken Opolo (2021: 4), "in most instances, a local government official (for instance, the Chief, District Officer or

District Commissioner) would coordinate the collection of community contributions.” However, despite such shortcomings Corrado optimistically believes the legacy of Harambee to still be alive even to date in Kenya, more so in the education system (2022: 37).

Harambee has consequently in some or other way enhanced the quality of diverse people and communities in Kenya. A range of community projects have been initiated through the Harambee movement and most especially in rural areas, which are generally impoverished. Akong’a (1989) describes four core principles of Harambee as follows. The first principle relates to a bottom-up method to bolster development. In this method, individuals in the community at the grassroots level contribute vigorously in the commencement, development and enactment of a range of local development projects. The second principle speaks to the principle of the collective good as opposed to individual benefits and thus it is the general public rather than just any individual who should benefit. This principle is nevertheless counterproductive when it comes to raising needed funding for a range of initiatives. The third principle speaks to the notion that any project, which is undertaken should positively impact on meeting the needs of the key stakeholders, who are invariably the majority. Any project should be a proactive one in seeking to benefit society and should not be overly reliant on the state coffers (Alushula 1969). The fourth principle supports the idea that any project implementation ought to make the most of the utilisation of local resources such as all needed human and material resources including funding so as to be cost efficient and minimise waste and under-utilisation.

Harambee usually encompasses five stages including initiation, planning, fundraising, implementation, and a final follow-up (Kenyatta 1964). Harambee was crucial in the early stages of Kenya’s development, as it tended to mobilise the masses. However, in recent years there have been moves to formalise and institutionalise development. These developmental projects, as it were, are now to be regulated largely through the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) (Opalo 2021: 5) led by the executive branch of government but still accountable to parliament. The idea behind this legislation, as Opalo has observed, was to “solve the twin problems of re-

source constraints and the lack of clear attribution for development projects” (2021: 5). The evolution of CDF out of the Harambees underscores how countries can “transition from personalistic clientelism into institutionalised forms of constituency service” (Opalo 2021: 6).

The Achievements of Harambee in Education

Before attaining independence in 1963, primary school education in Kenya was the responsibility of local communities, non-governmental bodies, and some churches. However, the social services and specifically education and health were derisory and unreachable to most people. Under Kenyatta’s leadership, the responsibility and administration for inter alia, primary schools progressively shifted to government agencies at both the provisional and district levels. Harambee was thus used to obtain resources so as to forge a new Kenya. Harambee assisted in the establishment of nursery schools to adequately prepare children to enter the primary schools. Nursery schools were however faced with having inadequately trained teachers, very few needed materials and inefficient human resources. Critically, for the most part they were deficient in not having a curriculum. Consequently, a nursery school did not relatively prepare young children for the more daunting primary education, which followed.

A number of schools at both primary and secondary levels were also built to prepare students to access higher education establishments while also preparing them to enter the labour market (Kinyanjui and Shepard 1972). This was a strong move away from the local authorities in the direction of free primary school education (Oketch and Rolleston 2007). Primary and secondary school education was thus greatly enhanced, however, many scholars could not access colleges until harambee was applied by local communities and the central government (Anderson 1969; Anderson 1975). Important to note is that in 1963 there were 151 secondary schools catering to 30,120 students and there were approximately 3000 secondary schools with an enrolment of about 620,000 students. Roughly forty percent were female students (UNESCO 2008, 2014) thus indicating increased education levels for females.

Once the need for more technical education was realised, it was necessary to rapidly adopt

critical actions such as selecting appropriate sites donated by the state, on which to construct technical institutes. The state was supportive in offering technical advice for these projects while politicians mobilised the required human and financial resources through harambee. Once institutes were fully developed, they became state controlled (Godfrey and Mutiso 1974; Kilemi and Ogbu 1999).

Piper (cited in Sikhakhane 2018) acknowledged some significant things that he asserts make Kenya extraordinary.

“...[I]n rural Kenya there is an expectation for kids to learn and be able to have basic skills... Exam results are far more readily available than in other countries in the region. The ‘mean scores’ for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and its equivalent at secondary school are posted in every school and over time, so that trends can be seen. Head teachers are held accountable, paraded around the community if they did well, or literally banned from school and kicked out if they did badly.”

Such levels of accountability speak volumes in what a community can achieve if roleplayers take the needs of a nation seriously. Schools tended to be somewhat expensive but were for the most part deficient in quality and thoroughness because they received negligible state subsidies. Also the regionalised arrangement of schools led to inequalities in the number and also the quality of schools, which existed in several regions of Kenya so many schools were absorbed into provincial or district school levels so as to create an equal playing ground (Amutabi 2003). A large number of educational institutions were built through funds raised via Harambee thus allowing many more children to attend school and higher education institutions. In addition, funds were also raised to pay the school fees for the children of less financially able families. Vital teaching materials were also provided from donations by Harambee stakeholders. There was also support relating to feeding schemes for scholars, payment of teachers and school staff and also the purchasing of needed furniture. Harambee schools augmented government education, but also posed new challenges. Correcting wrongs in education was not viewed as someone else’s undertaking. Harambee promoted active citizenship and pre-emptive engagement at all levels including the community, by public officials, educators and families of school going children. The

state paid the educators and parents in a community took it upon themselves to provide required educational resources and build schools.

African Path (2007) asserted that this was not foolproof, as for the most part, parents were impoverished and unable to offer any financial support. Nonetheless many schools were built and there were still multiple points of entry for participation by a diversity of stakeholders.

A major area of operation was education in which numerous schools and institutes of technology were constructed and large amounts of funding were collected to send young Kenyans to colleges locally as well as abroad (Keller 1977). From about 1971 local self-help committees throughout Kenya raised large amounts of money in order to develop harambee institutes of technology (Ministry of Education 2008). Within a two-year period, a number of institutes were in the pipeline including *inter alia*, Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisii, and Kisumu. Harambee delivered to the pastoral population a strong sense of personal and collective identity and responsibility as they assumed control over their affairs devoid of state intrusion and foreign overlordship. Such aspects would have been unthinkable during the period of colonial rule (Abreu 1982; Mbithi 1972). There have been important movements in promoting adult education per se so as to eradicate illiteracy among especially the older cohort who occupy themselves in pastoral activities and in the agricultural sector, towards training for national sustainability. A better educated workforce is paramount to sustainability, as adult education initiatives have empowered people to become more useful members from especially a social development context (Keller 1977).

Taking the above into consideration, the paper contends that it could/was through education as a social good that Harambee attained was seen to attain some of its important objectives, that is, the transformation agenda and increased literacy. Because of increased levels of consciousness that it brings, education engenders a certain kind of praxis as well as a dialogical role between the individual and society. Antonio Gramsci defines ‘praxis’ as “consciousness full of contradictions in which the philosopher himself, understood both individually and as entire social group, not merely grasps the contradictions but posits himself as an element of the contradiction and elevates this element to a principle of knowledge and therefore action” (Gram-

sci 1971: 405). From this it is easy to see that an educated society is better positioned to deal with some of its most pressing societal challenges than one that is not. Thus, education becomes important at two but interrelated levels, at the level of the individual and at the collective level of society in general. Accordingly, at an individual level, education transforms individuals steeped in ignorance and inertia, and transforms them into enlightened socially and individually conscious social agents. Thus knowledge and understanding substitute themselves for benign-ness. At a collective social level, society benefits from the informed contributions of an enlightened citizenry who are better placed to contribute to the developmental agenda of the nation.

Quality educational facilities and offerings are generally non-negotiable for national growth since it is graduates reduced will be forming in the future society and they constitute an essential part of the job market. However, sound education begins in the formative years of one's life (Shiman and Mwiria 1987). To this end there were hundreds of Harambee schools including state schools that were created on a Harambee basis for which many scholars received bursaries to attend school. The financial support also filtered through to higher education and made education more readily accessible and additionally provided relief to poor parents to support their children's education via the route of community finance initiatives (Abreu 1982).

Mbithi and Rasmusson (1977) ascertained in their study that the benefits of Harambee in the education sector liberated parents from the pressure of sourcing appropriate education for their children so as to empower them to engage in productive work and to earn a fair wage (Kilemi and Ogbu 1999). Harambee as a lived indigenous philosophy certainly had scope to empower the masses and serve to counter neo-liberal development models that tended to prolong poverty in Kenyan society.

Suspicion concerning the intentions of missionary education given the colonial period experiences, and a desire to promote indigenous culture drove communities to open Harambee schools. Thus, from 1963, independent schools for the most part transmuted into harambee schools. The government indicated that community self-help projects would allow a community to benefit and

should characteristically be in local activities that could benefit a group of individuals living in a designated area (Vershina et al. 2018). Any initiatives were to be in line with the national development plan and all related costs needed to be judiciously assessed. Harambee grew in leaps and bounds with its African socialism slant and after 1963 and the estimated value of projects climbed to Ksh 3.2 billion according to the government of Kenya. One important driver was the need for a semi-skilled and skilled workforce to emerge once European administrators left the country, leaving huge gaps in the country due to the non-provision of sound educational policies by them as colonial overlords. This was exacerbated by a very rapid urbanisation to cities such as Nairobi, Mombasa and Nankuru (Schilling 1972; Wallis 1976). Lipset (1959) stressed that transformation and reconstruction in Kenya required an increase in inter-alia literacy rates and general education so as to promote and grow the democratic course of the country. Greater levels of education would serve to enhance social mobility. Thus it was a matter of time before politicians, in efforts to ingratiate themselves with their constituents, assumed the key roles in the refurbishment of existing schools and in the creation of new ones. In addition, local leaders were required to seek external funding from abroad (Chepkwony 2008; Chieni 2001; Ombudo 1986).

Importantly for Kenya's developmental trajectory, institutes of science and technology were established through harambee exertions supported by the state, and rural polytechnics were exclusively established by the local communities through harambee initiatives in which they still play a role in management activities (Kintzer 1988; Mikkelsen 1977). Each institute had its own plan for developing a curriculum and an enrolment plan among other important roles. It should be noted that public universities were the key roleplayers in higher education initiatives and this has led to a very diversified higher education system, which is still in existence today. A major problem was a lack of funding and sufficient university spots for students. Especially the poor were disadvantaged and mainly those on self-sponsorship programmes could not continue for long. Thus, support for them was imperative and as the state has limited funding available, harambees sought to obtain funding to send such students abroad for specialised education. In 2005, the state introduced a Ministry of State for Youth

Affairs. In addition, in 2006, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) was created and allotted one billion Kenya shillings to be distributed as advances to the youth to set up enterprises at discounted charges and without any security required to do so (Ombok 2007; Department of Youth Training 2008).

A UNICEF report of 1981 indicated that especially women had become more successful in terms of education since most families are now investing in the education of women (Chidzero 1984). The gender bias that existed favouring males in education is now also a thing of the past and families actively encourage young women to obtain some or other qualification (Nyangau 2014). One consequence of this has been the added voice now afforded to women in decision making, a facet of daily life, which was generally considered to be important only for males to be involved in, in what was a highly paternalistic system. It is noteworthy that in 2007, the Government of Kenya established and implemented a policy and created a fund aimed at empowering women through entrepreneurial activities development (Holmquist 1984; Republic of Kenya 2012; Nyangau 2014). This was intended to help all women irrespective of their income, to engage in the economy and contribute to their upliftment as well as that of the community. The Harambee drive to a large extent relied on the role of women given that ninety percent of them are engaged in rural agricultural activities and supply the needed workforce and capital for projects (David et al. 1978).

Partly due to Harambee initiatives in education, women's voices are eventually being considered in what has been a male dominated Kenyan society. There is still however need to empower them more and modify educational institution curricula so that their increasingly important role can be further recognised as stated over four decades ago (Smock 1977). Also important to note is that the government of Kenya understands that the provision of universal primary education is essential for enhanced economic and social development and that primary education for women is critical to development.

Based on the literature it is evident that Harambee projects were originally intended to and in fact promoted the economic development in Kenya and had the resolve to elevate the standard of living of many Kenyans who were impoverished (Mutiso

and Godfrey 1973). A wide range of social issues were tackled relating especially to the rural communities. The focus has been primarily on education in this paper. Harambee can be likened to the Ubuntu philosophy and the concept of contributionism, which supports the notion that one exists because of others and that all people in the community need to contribute to the common good by standing together as one.

Some Shortfalls

Due to the reality that the Kenyan government could not make available sufficient government-funded schools, the community-built *harambee* secondary schools were developed. Such schools were hypothetically to obtain government assistance to provide for teachers and learning resources, however, the support did not always arrive. Nonetheless, Harambee offered much in the line of growing the education system in Kenya, as many more children received at least elementary education. Many more children entered primary education but once they ended the primary phase, they were unable to access secondary schools due to their vast numbers, which the schools could not accommodate. They were also not considered to be suitable for employment, as they lacked many skills that secondary education would have provided for them (Wellings 2017). In addition, they were not at a level of education, which would make them likely to be entrepreneurial in orientation. Harambee had the negative effect of creating a divergence in the secondary school system, and it distinguished school types by their quality (Ojiambo 2009). They counted on external funding and battled to make ends meet. This restricted them to a mainly academic curriculum, which could not meet the need for skills required. Harambee schools also fared worse due to their less skilled teachers, lack of resources and academic qualifications, which were viewed as selection devices with weaker students in attendance than those in government schools (Kinyanjui 1974; Kinyanjui 1975). Mwiria (1985: 98) states, "Using this measure, government-maintained and Harambee schools appear on extreme ends of a scale, with the former performing much better at the national secondary school selection examination, the Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE)".

Communities often opted to create new Harambee schools even though there were not essentially enough scholars in a particular area (KICD 2017). The result was an oversupply of schools without suitable resources. The majority of Harambee schools were also under the jurisdiction of local leaders including chiefs, religious leaders and primary school teachers led by headmasters who were often authoritarian in leadership style (Mwiria 1990). The bottom line was that there was still much joblessness amongst those graduating from the secondary school system. There was also increasing disenchantment by school leavers as a consequence and also their parents as they assumed their offspring would be better positioned to find work through the energy and effort expended on Harambee (Prewitt 1974; Anderson 1973). A plan was developed to create at least some village polytechnic schools with the objective of delivering technical training for a few of the scholars originating from the primary school system that would help them to find some suitable employment in the countryside. Such schools were however inadequately resourced in terms of suitable manpower and teaching supplies. Furthermore, their curricula were not developed to meet the real challenges faced and they merely offered very limited trade courses such as carpentry and building that were mainly required for urban scholars (Wellings 2017). The advent of the village polytechnic schools had very little support as they were reminiscent of colonial schools, which imparted only manual labour skills to meet colonial overlord administration needs (Wellings 2017; Prewitt 1974). Generally, the education provided did not allow for adequately skilled students when it came to university level entrance, according to a UNICEF report of 1981. From the mid-1970s, the government tried to assist Harambee schools, and tended to pay the majority of the teachers' salaries.

The government concurrently followed a policy of "education for self-reliance," and education was focused on preparing students for employment in agricultural enterprises as well as in business. Universal free education was eventually announced for all primary schooling in 2002 but the primary schools were unable to accommodate the amplified request for basic schooling, and overcrowding resulted and was made worse by a clear dearth of needed resources to accommodate the masses (Abreu 1981).

The institutes of technology were intended to make available the skills required by those exiting the secondary school system, but only a few of the many needed skills were imparted due to the deficient curriculum, which existed and thus the huge levels of unemployment were exacerbated (Kinyanjui 1975). The institutes were highly politicised local entities, which tended to limit government and foreign support participation. They also attracted the wealthier members of society and many institutes were reliant on the tenure of a politician or two, and once such politicians were out of office, funding for resources dried up and the local communities were unable to offer meaningful support. Desired foreign support for institutes was minimal at best, almost guaranteeing their failure (Barkan and Okumu 1979).

Another problem was that diverse areas of the country had diverse needs for education provision but the same curriculum was taught irrespective of needs thus minimising the impact of education (Wellings 2017; Eklof 1974). Evidence demonstrated that the extended educational opportunity of Harambee in reality reinforced existing inequalities at the regional level (Mwiria 1990). Girls were more likely to enrol in poorer quality Harambee schools than boys. In any case, the government erected many more boys' government schools (Krystall 1980).

Towards the late 1960s the Harambee school movement had adopted a characteristically political character, as various local politicians sought to win favour with their voters, and began to play chief roles in the establishment of new schools and supported existing ones to obtain needed resources (Government of Kenya 1965). This support ultimately ended and Harambee schools came to increasingly depend on churches for support as well as other local or foreign aid, which was not forthcoming as desired (Court and Ghai 1974). The government of Kenya often criticised Harambee schools as offering inferior education due to poor facilities (Government of Kenya 1977), but did very little to assist them. In fact, the state often tended to attract quality Harambee primary school teachers away to government schools. Information technology access is also a pressing issue as Kinuthia (2009) asserts, "...the failure to use ICT is itself a result of the digital and knowledge divides that exist, and their causes are deeply embedded in the complex historical and socio-cultural context of the

country. Fortunately, with the Vision 2030 goals, the Kenyan government has begun to implement strategies that will address these paradoxes”.

According to Lillis and Ayot (1986), there were 1,466 Harambee schools in 1984, compared to 300 in 1970 and this accounted for sixty-one and fifty-two percent of all the available secondary schools in 1984 and 1970, respectively. A major issue was that Harambee secondary school accounts were not subjected to regular auditing, resulting in sustained misappropriation of school funds by corrupt head teachers and their school committees. In addition, the government also failed to cope with the request by Harambee schools for competent teachers. Harambee schools persisted, as the government did not want to antagonise the populace and in any event if people wished to pay for about half of the money required for education, then the state would have less of an encumbrance.

Progression

Harambee gave the rural based population some scope for participatory development, and offered a means of inclusion of the peripheral groupings in society thus in a limited manner mitigating inequalities (Keller 1983). Harambee assisted in the development of education in Kenya through fundraising drives to build schools and colleges. It sought to mobilise resources for projects at a grassroots level and was thus also an instrument for political mobilisation (David et al. 1978; Godfrey and Mutiso 1974). There was a strong sense of community and collective participation in educational and other development programmes by people from different ethnic groups, which has had the effect of promoting national unity. Some have argued that Harambee also aided rather than abetted the mitigation of rural poverty (Waiguru 2002).

Harambee also greatly assisted in the provision of essential education infrastructure development, which is considered to be a constructive feature of Kenya's growth. The problems manifesting for Harambee were principally of a financial nature (Chieni 1998) and hampered future initiatives. There was a large abuse of Harambee funds that were diverted by corrupt politicians, which placed huge additional tax burdens on the impoverished masses. The government tried to limit the nature of Harambee being used by politicians

to garner votes so as to defend citizens from often rampant corruption. Many politicians used Harambee funding drives to enrich themselves and remain in powerful positions by enticing voters with promises of needed projects. There was nonetheless poor coordination and management of many Harambee projects. Only in 2004 was the Public Officers Ethics Act enacted, which specified a new-fangled code of ethics for all public servants including politicians who were now 'controlled' from organising and soliciting funds for any Harambee projects. Stricter measures were thus enacted to limit corrupt activities. Political meddling, misuse of funds and a variety of squabbles amongst leaders had the effect of breaking down the hard-fought spirit of unity and collaboration and of course the notion of self-help, which was vital in Kenya. Ngau (1987) states that exertions to organise Harambee through regulatory and planning controls caused contradictions and dislocations in Harambee projects. State interventions between the local grassroots leaders and bureaucrats frustrated and stifled a theoretically good model of grassroots participation in economic, social and political development.

Harambee schools clearly played a significant role in the provision of education to pupils who would not be otherwise admitted to government schools (Kaviti 2018). There were about 600 Harambee schools by 1999 and a number of government schools were created on a Harambee foundation. Mbithi and Rasmusson (1977) stated that Harambee education projects helped parents to focus on their own productivity and not worry that much about the education of their children. Literacy also increased. In addition, many people considered that Harambee education would be of long-term value and supported it by providing funding as best they could. They believed it would bolster the levels of education and provide important employment opportunities for the recipients emanating from Harambee, secondary schools, institutes of science and technology, and also village polytechnics. In some cases, the community established schools that were taken over by the government once they were believed to be of a suitable standard. By 1970, Harambee activities increased to such an extent that the government became concerned especially when projects were either abandoned or simply copied by different stakeholders in the same area. A lack of planning was blamed and the government from then on required more rigorous require-

ments for any project approval to be granted and it thus reinforced the already bureaucratic approach (Ngau 1987).

This demonstrated to a limited extent the government's resolve in development projects (Bliss 1988; Akong'a 1988). Through Harambee people generally gathered to raise funds known as *mchango* (a contribution). In the decades after President Moi thousands of schools have been built, and Kenya is investing in high-speed internet to lift the education of its people and Harambee is an idea that must not be allowed to die due to invasive corruption.

Many Kenyans energetically challenged the acceptability of the educational status quo when considering the widespread high levels of unemployment (NESC 2007) but Harambee initially certainly embodied the ideas of support, team-work, responsibility and community self-reliance and from an education perspective led to considerable developments in the delivery of basic schooling needs and facility provision. Along with state support, Harambee self-help projects were responsible for the construction of over 200 schools and 260 nursery centres (Bailey 1993). Despite the initial good intentions, the construction of Harambee schools created false hopes for many scholars and ultimately many parents realised that investing in education in a Harambee secondary school was a poor venture at best. In addition, the government of Kenya promoted unrealistic hope for those seeking to empower themselves through quality education (Shiman and Mwiria 1987). The use of Harambee became slanted, differing from its original stress on the basic production to the provision of large, expensive social projects including schools, and institutes of higher learning, which added only some limited value in real terms. Harambee school education is, notwithstanding its fair quality, more likely than only primary-level education, or no education at all, to advance a scholar's chances of upward mobility in society.

Harambee no longer effectively promotes cultural values and the participants are often left out of important decision-making in projects that are undertaken. There are a myriad of challenges facing Harambee and these have been grounded on the state's failure to evenly distribute the major development projects throughout Kenya. The leadership of Harambee resides in the local elites inter alia governmental officers, educators, church lead-

ers and businessmen who have some authority and power in rural areas. These people tend to regulate the local economy and policy (Ngau 1987). They do assist the rural population to organise and erect social amenities, by utilising funding from both private and state sources, but require some payback for any economic or political gains received (Holmquist 1979).

Many families are unable to pay for their children's education, as funds earmarked for education projects are looted. This somewhat ironically, makes self-help even more important today than ever before, especially in education. Harambee school education has become even more expensive for both the government and individuals. In addition, the quality of education remains lower than in government schools. Even so the Harambee schools still have an important function as agents of socialisation and promoters of meritocracy and expanded economic opportunity (Ogolla n.d.; Ngau 1987).

Nonetheless, fundraising under the guise of Harambee continues. This does however possibly create new 'corridors for immoral extortions' (Kipchumba 2016) and it is time to now bring back the nobility of the true Harambee ideal. The limited Harambee of the 1960s has today been replaced with a nation-wide Harambee, and the contributions have become so onerous that the Kenyan government has announced a schedule for Harambee 'seasons'. In addition, what was initially voluntary support in the form of contributions is now becoming increasingly obligatory placing additional burdens on many in society. A formerly altruistic way to unify Kenyans "has often bred corruption, with government officials sometimes soliciting donations for their own means and trying to evoke harambee to enact public programmes paid by private donations... [Harambee] removed the responsibilities of the government from taking care of the public. They rallied various communities around development projects to work for free... The idea was misused by the presidents and leaders. Previous regimes insisted that harambees were a sign of patriotism, that was the problem" (Nderu cited in Musau 2020). The current notion "... fosters a ruler-subject relationship that has tended to alienate the local people from the whole Harambee process" (Ngau 1987). The state attempted to restructure Harambee by building a bigger bureaucracy to oversee policy and it also increased regulatory

procedures (Ngau 1987; Pattillo 2020). In spite of the many challenges posed by Harambee implementation, the grassroots population have not abandoned it as the required path.

A range of stakeholders have seemingly opted to remove themselves from Harambee activities, and reorganise themselves into small informal group activities and far-reaching forms of community actions, which supported greater citizen control rather than being reliant on politicians and other manipulators (Thiong'o 1983).

CONCLUSION

Involvement in Harambee has demonstrated that strategies are needed to allow for far greater control by citizens leading to more effective and operational projects promoting quality education at whatever level required, and thus an adequately skilled labour force to meet the challenges posed in the 21st century. Harambee was aimed at combating the three apparent enemies, which include disease, ignorance and poverty, and education is clearly the way to mitigate these. Harambee must be 'empowered' to support the unemployed, and offer appropriate education to meet the challenges facing Kenya. The government should play a greater role in education projects and make certain that corruption is stamped out. Pedagogical approaches for Kenyan schools and institutes, need to become more learner-centred with equal educational opportunity for all and this can only materialise if the government plays its needed role. Pedagogy and teaching approaches need to be carefully reconsidered. Curriculum reforms are needed to adequately meet the needs of the country and to this end all stakeholders need to be consulted.

The government must craft and make available useful guidelines and genuine assistance for Harambee initiatives. The private sector and also foreign donors in collaboration with the state, need to be involved in a purely altruistic approach in efforts to lift the quality of education to new heights in order to promote socio-economic needs and national sustainability. A critically important need is to increase the number of suitably skilled teachers in service in Harambee as well as government schools while considering regional disparities that exist in having truly enabling school environments that are resourced adequately for their purposes. The government must endeavour to better accom-

modate children that are disabled as well as those in underrepresented groups. ICT also needs to become more of a part and parcel of both the delivery and content of education, failing which the disadvantages are likely to deepen and development will suffer a serious blow.

President Uhuru Kenyatta promised that he would attempt to address the education issues in part by distributing free laptops to class one students through what was termed a digital literacy programme called "DigiSchool". The programme was planned to introduce public primary school children to the use of digital technology and communication in learning initiatives. Today, the programme is virtually complete with more than 20,000 out of 23,951 public primary schools having been issued with the devices for learners and teachers alike. In addition, the Kenyan government also trained over 91,000 primary school teachers on digital learning methods. For future generations, ICT and computer use training was also integrated into the teachers' training curriculum at college levels.

When he was elected, Kenyatta made education one of his top priorities, and he catalysed a considerable effort to transform the curriculum for primary and secondary schools to emphasise on core competencies and practical skills required for a modern workforce.

The education goals of the Kenyan development blueprint, 2030 Vision, are noteworthy. The government intends to inter-alia deliver internationally competitive quality education and training and research for development through decreasing illiteracy by increasing access to education, improving the conversion rate from primary to secondary school attendance, and additionally raising the quality and applicability of education. In 2013 free laptops were made available for students, which was a good government step in the right direction. Harambee indeed mobilised Kenyans, who applied it to resolve problems in the country by collectively working on issues they faced. Harambee came to embody a spirit of Kenyan unity, which is needed today as ever before.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Harambee by its very nature builds collective support, promotes social responsibility and aids in obtaining needed resources. These are aspects, which are also needed for budding entrepreneurs, thus skills are taught, which are invaluable.

While there have been gradual reforms in a number of areas such as secondary curricula and improvements in teacher education, and also strengthening of needed partnerships with the private sector, Harambee must not be ignored. It was and should still be as originally intended, serve as a means of unifying people and empowering them to solve their problems and be of greater use to Kenyan society. Before this can materialise, there is a dire need for Harambee not to be used to mobilise the population to vote for certain politicians who abuse it and as a propaganda tool. Within an African context, people of all social strata and irrespective of their ethnicity need to be coalesced into the decision-making around all social issues as meaningful contributors to ideas to be considered in solving pressing problems and challenges faced in society in general.

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