

African Contextual Ethics

Hunger, Leadership, Faith and Media

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Table of Contents

Preface	7
<i>Elisabeth Nduku</i>	
1. Hunger in Kenya: Interreligious Ethics of Solidarity	11
<i>Jude Likori Omukaga</i>	
2. Investing in Human Capital: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction in Tanzania	75
<i>Aidan G. Msafiri</i>	
3. Effective Leadership in Promoting a Culture of Business Ethics	97
<i>Magdalene A. Dimba</i>	
4. Whose Ethics? The Place of Christian Ethics in Kenya's New Constitution	113
<i>Kakeeto A. Richard</i>	
5. The Influence of Media Ethics on Governance in Kenya	127
<i>Job M. Mwaura, Caroline Biwott and Ann Chepkemei</i>	
Contributors	143

INVESTING IN HUMAN CAPITAL: A PREREQUISITE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN TANZANIA

Aidan G. Msafiri

Terminology

Human capital

Human resources are the people who constitute the workforce of an organisation, society, business or nation.¹ Human capital is the aptitudes, skills, and competencies necessary for effective, integral, transformative and efficient administration and sustainable development. Human capital is the *conditio sine qua non* for the sustainable use and management of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Natural resources

Natural resources are the useful physical, biological, geological and environmental endowments and riches or material found on or below the earth's crust.² They include forests, soil, fauna, mineral deposits such as gold, diamonds, oil, natural gas, fresh water, seas, oceans and raw

¹ See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Resources.

² Ibid.

materials. Such naturally occurring riches ought to be sustainably and efficiently used for meeting the needs of humans, and all beings, not only in this generation but in generations to come.

Redefining poverty

Jeffrey D. Sachs in his book, *The End of Poverty*, observes: ‘It is useful to distinguish between three degrees of poverty: extreme (or absolute) poverty and relative poverty. Extreme poverty means that the households cannot meet basic needs for survival. They are chronically hungry, unable to access health care, like the amenities of safe drinking water and sanitation, cannot afford education for some or all of the children and perhaps lack rudimentary shelter – a roof to keep the rains out of the hut, a chimney to remove the smoke from the cook stove – and basic articles of clothing such as shoes.’³

Thought-provoking questions

Tanzania is rich in mineral wealth and abundant in natural resources, so why does it remain one of the poorest nations on earth? What should come first, human resource development or natural resource management? Are there any lessons we can learn from the trends and misguided approaches Tanzania has been adopting in their last fifty years of independence? Where is Tanzania headed (*quo vadis?*) economically, technologically, educationally, environmentally, socially, religiously, culturally, etc.? As Tanzanians, what do we want to achieve? Do we have a common viable and practical vision, mission and strategic plan for poverty reduction as a nation, or do we simply adopt, copy and paste culture to satisfy our selfish political interests and individual successes? What is the impact of the extractive industry, and gold mining in particular, on the poorest of the poor in Tanzania today? Why is the average life expectancy as low as 51 in Tanzania? Why does

³ Sachs, Jeffrey D., *The End of Poverty*, New York: Penguin Books, 2006, 20.

89.9% of the entire population of 44 million still live on less than 2 USD a day? Are the current governmental economic and investment policies for the profit of Tanzanian investors, or foreign ones?

What are the effects of artisanal extractive mining and fishing on the soils, flora, fauna, environment and climate of Tanzania, and can we not justly and reasonably affirm now that Tanzania has failed to combat corruptive practices, tax evasion, illegal contracts, resource depletion and unnecessary governmental and ministerial expenditures? Is true empowerment of human capital not the number one factor for Tanzania's success? Why, for instance, is such a small country like Rwanda, only the size of the Mwanza region, today emerging from poverty? Are the Millennium Development Goals viable, achievable, mythological or magical for Tanzania? What is the status and quality of human resource in Tanzania? Do we really invest in quality education, excellence, competence and foresight, or do these goals remain merely political and academic tunes? Is our tax system efficient? What will bring true social, economic and developmental revolution in a country like Tanzania – only an endowment of natural resources or the transformation of human resources? How serious and prepared are we as individuals and as a nation to put an end to the seven traps or bottlenecks for economic growth, in particular:

- Resource depletion and mismanagement
- Bad fiscal policies
- Governance failures
- Cultural barriers and enemies
- Geopolitical and geo-economic forces
- An ever-growing greedy and individualistic culture
- Lack of innovative research and development
- Environmental and climate challenges against food sovereignty and sufficiency

Are we investing enough in quality and transformative education on primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in Tanzania? What is the impact of our weak tax laws and regulatory mechanisms? Are the mineral deposits in Tanzania a blessing or curse? Do we believe in value-centred, transformative education that teaches principles of self-reliance? Do we have the courage to return to the core values of the Arusha Declaration? What about Nyerere's 'Intellectual Mission and Vision for Tanzania', *Nitajielimisha kwa kadiri ya uwezo wangu na kutumia elimu yangu kwa faida ya wote?*

Are the poor aware of what they are missing? Do we see the need to develop centres for applied development research and poverty reduction institutionally, regionally, nationally, etc.?

Point of departure

Undoubtedly, proper human resource development and use remains the key driving force behind efficient and sustainable natural resource use and management. As the adage goes, 'we need to sit on the shoulders of giants to see far', there are neither shortcuts nor magic bullets for reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development by 2025 (one of the MDGs) without conscientiously investing in human capital and development. Any developing nation in the world has necessarily adopted this formula. Today, the BRICS countries (i.e. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are achieving immense socio-economic and technological developments, primarily through radical revolutions in their human capital investment. A true revolution in human capital management needs to be considered as the driving force for reducing poverty and achieving socio-economic and human transformation.

Mismanagement of natural resources in Tanzania: Key socio-economic and developmental dilemmas and crises

The extractive industry: an engine for massive resource depletion and misuse

Despite being one of the most mineral-rich countries in Africa, with huge gold, tanzanite, diamond, oil and natural gas deposits, Tanzania remains one of the poorest countries in the world. In his recent research on the impact of gold mining in Tanzania, Allan Lissner affirms: ‘Tanzania is estimated to be sitting on top of a USD 39 billion treasure. When you factor in the large quantities of diamonds, copper, silver, gemstones, and other minerals – not to mention its wildlife, agricultural and human resources – Tanzania should be a very prosperous nation.’⁴

Recent statistics indicate that the life expectancy in Tanzania has decreased to 51 years, and 89.9% of the country’s population struggles to survive each day on approximately at 2 USD.⁵

In addition to the gross mismanagement of Tanzania’s mineral wealth, the extraction industry is also increasing poverty and the loss of indigenous and ancestral land, soil, flora, fauna and life in general. Worst still, observations show that the price of gold is appreciating annually. As far as natural gas is concerned, Tanzania has huge deposits and potential for natural gas production. This includes the Songosongo in Kilwa and the Mnazi Bay in Mtwara gas reserves, among others. However, one really wonders and questions how does the natural gas serves to benefit the poorest of the poor, and especially those in the poorest towns and regions of southern Tanzania, such as Mnazi-Bay, Ziwani, Tandahimba, Nanyamba, Kitangali, Msijute, Majengo, Magomeni, Majengo and Likonde, etc. How is the on-going gas and oil exploration by rich Canadian and British multinational companies

⁴ Lissner, Alan, NCA & Act Alliance, *Someone Else’s Treasure. The Impact of Gold Mining in Tanzania*, Dar es Salaam, 2011, 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

directly affecting these villages and areas? Is the exploration of natural gas in southern Tanzania a curse or a blessing? Does it in any way reduce poverty among the people in the Mtwara, Mikindani, Lindi and Ruvuma regions as a whole, before being siphoned or transported to Dar es Salaam? Do we understand and agree that charity begins at home?

Mismanagement of Tanzania's agricultural resources and potential

It is an undeniable fact that about 70% of all arable land in Tanzania is dug by hand; 20% is tilled by animal driven ploughs and only 10% is tilled by tractors or machines.⁶ Worst still, Tanzania is a profoundly agriculture-dependent country when it comes to food production and the exportation of cash crops for foreign income. Crops are affected by sporadic and unreliable rains; a result of the ever-worsening drought spells and the effects of climate change on local and global levels. Tanzania still depends on imported food and aid; consequently, nearly 40% of Tanzanians struggle for survival, and hit hard by vicious cycles of abject and extreme poverty they fail to make ends meet.

Despite the 2010 Kilimo Kwanza Programme to prioritise farming in Tanzania with nearly 903.8 billion shillings to boost the agricultural sector,⁷ the core competencies, expertise and skills for a true green revolution in Tanzania still remain elusive and the programme mere political propaganda.

As far as agricultural subsidies are concerned (seeds, fertilizers and voucher systems), recently donors have been strongly opposed to agricultural subsidies. It has been confirmed that only 'farmers who can afford the fertilizer at the subsidised rate are supposed to be deemed eligible by the village committees, headed by the village executive officer... some farmers sign for vouchers they do not receive in exchange for a small cash payment. In other cases two farmers club together to redeem a single voucher. The minimum 50 kg bag fertilizer

⁶ Agenda Participation 2000, 2011, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

is sometimes sold in smaller units.’⁸ Will such small subsidies in key agricultural implementation, co-opted by bureaucracy and corruption, contribute to poverty reduction or escalation? Do the ‘smiling cows’ of Belgium who, on a daily basis get government subsidies of 10 euros, not fare better than most Tanzanians who get less than 1 euro a year in agricultural subsidies from the government?

Finally, farmers that annually produce cash crops such as coffee, cotton, cashew nuts and pyrethrum cannot sell their products for monetary value. For example, the current price of 1 kg of Arabica coffee from Kilimanjaro is about TSh800, or US\$0.50. However, the total input leading to the acquisition of 1 kg of coffee is about TSh2000 or US\$2.30. That means for every 1 kg of coffee, coffee growers invest \$1.30 to get \$0.50. Worst still, 1 kg of Arabica coffee in Frankfurt, Geneva, Munich, Vienna, New York, etc. is approximately \$10.00 to \$12.00. In this situation, do we expect the poor farmers to alleviate poverty? Never. This is simply hoping against all hope.

Mismanagement of pastoral and marine resources and potential

Despite having the second highest amount of cattle (19 million), goats (11.7 million), sheep (3.9 million), pigs and poultry (33 million) in Africa,⁹ Tanzanians are not able to get out of the vicious cycle of poverty through proper and efficient use of these resources. Quite often, such quantity does not give way to a better quality of life or socio-economic transformation. Sadly, the contribution of this sector to the national income is very small and almost insignificant.

In addition, Tanzania is blessed with a rich and expansive coastal area for fishing. This is about 64,000 sq km, and an area of nearly 223,000 sq km of the Indian Ocean which belongs to Tanzania’s fishing zone. Further, Tanzania has one of the longest fishing strips in Africa

⁸ Policy Forum, *Tanzania Governance Review 2008-2009*, Dar es Salaam, 2011, 32.

⁹ Agenda Participation 2000, 12.

with nearly 800 km spanning from the Mozambique border to Kenya.¹⁰ However, all this fishing potential is either misused or under-utilised.

Finally, such coastal and marine resources in Tanzania (e.g. coral reefs, mangrove forests, marine biodiversity, tourist attractions, etc.) could have a profound developmental impact in terms of poverty alleviation and socio-economic development. Unfortunately, the development of and investment in human capital, the driving force behind development, is still a very big challenge and impediment for true change and transformation to occur in Tanzania.

Mismanagement of tourism and wildlife resources

Ordinary Tanzanian citizens are not the key beneficiaries of the income generated by tourism and wildlife resources. Tanzania remains one of the premier tourist paradises in the world. Tanzania has twelve national parks (including the famous Serengeti), thirty-four game reserves and thirty-eight game controlled areas.¹¹ There are also many tourist attraction centres: these include the highest mountain in Africa (Mount Kilimanjaro), Oldivai Gorge, Ngorongoro Crater and Zanzibar's historic stone town and the vast, clean white-sand beaches fringed with beautiful palm trees.¹²

Mismanagement of manufacturing industries

The entire manufacturing industry in post-independence Tanzania remains a ghost. Most of the then nationally-owned manufacturing and agro-processing plants are moribund. Worse still, the small-scale industries under the umbrella of the Small Industries Development Organisation have remained white elephants. Most of the few manufacturing plants that remain deal with the processing of simple consumer products like food stuffs, beverages, tobacco, textiles, etc.

¹⁰ Agenda Participation 2000, 12.

¹¹ United Republic of Tanzania, *National Adaptation Programme of Action*, Vice President's Office, Division of Environment, January 2007, 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, 12.

Due to current climatic trends, Tanzania's industrial potential for poverty reduction has been more impeded from developing than ever before. The most immediate and notable impacts include a major decrease in industrial productivity due to an unstable power supply and a low or inadequate supply of agricultural materials. This has resulted in a scarce inflow of foreign exchange. Other detrimental socio-economic effects include high inflation rates and sky rocketing prices each year.

Inadequate investment in education and development of human resources

Though there have been quantitative increases in both primary and secondary schools, as well as the addition of more colleges for tertiary education since Tanzania achieved independence, the education in Tanzania has been decreasing in quality over time. Quality education, the driving force behind and hallmark of socio-economic transformation, has become a far-off dream. This has resulted in a lack of professional competence and foresight in the workforce, and has affected the fight against extreme poverty in Tanzania.

It is an undeniable fact that any society or nation is transformed through skilful and competent human capital. That is why Julius K. Nyerere repeatedly asserted in one of his powerful national education-centred TANU precepts, saying: '*Nitajielimisha kwa kadiri ya uwezo wangu wote na kutumia elimu yangu kwa faida ya wote.*'¹³ He further reiterates: '*Wengine hufikiri kuwa kujielimisha ni kujua kusoma na kuandika...wengine wetu hasa baadhi ya viongozi hufikiri kuwa tunajua kila kitu na hatuna haja ya kujifunza jambo lolote zaidi...*'¹⁴

There is always a big discrepancy between the approved yearly budget and the actual expenditure for transformative education. According to recent (2011) findings with regard to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MOEVT), this Ministry spent

¹³ Nyerere, Julius K., *Tujisahihisha*, Dar es Salaam: Haki Elimu, 2010, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

'almost TSh 2 billion on the purchase of new vehicles'. With this amount, the Inspectorate Department alone will spend TSh 1.6 billion to acquire vehicles. This provokes many questions, such as what sort of vehicles are required, why there is such a huge allocation towards them and why this amount could not have been planned for development projects such as the construction of 160 teachers' houses.¹⁵

In addition, the Tanzanian education sector is possesses multiple structural weaknesses and inefficiencies. The lack of sufficient, competent and committed teachers, teacher absenteeism, inequitable resource distribution, poor quality teaching aids and facilities, a lack of conducive teaching and learning environments, classrooms, lecture halls, basic technologies and support, health, water and transport facilities are just some of the issues facing education in Tanzania, which therefore affect any significant investments in human capital.

Corruption, tax administration and evasion: key obstacles for poverty alleviation

Now, more than ever before, corruption has become deeply entrenched in the public sector and has reached horrendous, monstrous and cancerous proportions. Tanzania ranks fourth in the world for corruption, after Pakistan, Nigeria and Kenya, respectively. As far as corrupt attitudes, culture and practices or syndromes are concerned, today, a large number of government officers and workers, ministers, parliamentarians, politicians, police, medical staff, media, the army, private companies, NGOs, medical personnel and staff are involved in corruption. The tension, discussion and anger expressed in 2012 at the 10th National Parliament by the Hon. Zitto Kabwe and the resulting dissolution of the cabinet is the most vivid and current proof of such corruption.

According to Transparency International (TI), a global body that curbs corruption, Tanzania's efforts in fighting corruption have

¹⁵ Policy Forum, op. cit. 2.

substantially failed. In TI's Global Corruption Perception Index, Tanzania dropped from 102 in 2008 to 126 in 2009.¹⁶ According to a recent report by Agenda Participation 2000, it is affirmed that *'ubadhirifu wa pesa za umma ulifanywa na serikali kuu ambayo kwa kipindi cha mwaka 2008 pekee ripoti ya mkaguzi na mthibiti mkuu wa hesabu za serikali Tsh.772, 392, 715, 400/= zilipotea au kufujwa. Kiasi ambacho kingetumika kununua matrekta, 3,862 kwa ajili ya kuboresha kilimo kwa bei y ash. 20,000,000/= kwa trekta moja sawa na wastani wa matrekta mawili kila kata kwa Tanzania mzima.'*¹⁷

Effective tax systems in any country are key stimuli in poverty reduction and development. However, Tanzania's tax system and revenue policy lack public responsiveness, accountability and transparency as well as institutional capacity. According to recent research on the tax systems in Mozambique and Tanzania (2011), conducted by Chr. Michelsen Institute and the International Centre for Tax and Development, the following was discovered:

'For Mozambique and Tanzania the tax-to-GDP ratio was 14.2% and 14.8% respectively in 2007, i.e. below the average (14.9%) for lower African income countries, while Zambia generated a tax ratio of about 17.7%.'¹⁸

Finally, besides the inefficient tax system in Tanzania, poverty reduction still remains an elusive goal due to the ever-growing government culture of chronic over-expenditure and allowance. This is evidenced in the current struggle for lucrative allowances for seminars, workshops, conferences, symposia, bonanzas, per diems, etc. which always serve to benefit a very small, elite section of society.

¹⁶ Agenda Participation 2000, 23.

¹⁷ Ibid., 23.

¹⁸ Fjeldstad, Odd-Helge/ Heggstad, Kari, *The Tax System in Mozambique Tanzania and Zambia. Capacity And Constraints*, Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2011, 12.

Having exposed the key areas and scenarios of mismanagement and misuse of natural resources in this beautiful country, let us now try to find the ‘missing link’ by exploring the primacy and relevance of human capital in the quest towards poverty alleviation and integral, sustainable development in Tanzania.

Investing in human capital for poverty alleviation and socio-economic transformation: key principles and benchmarks

Prioritising human capital development

First and foremost, Opaschowsk strongly reiterates that ‘anyone who gives up learning in the future might just as well give up living’¹⁹. This means that learning for the acquisition of transformative core competencies, skills and attitudes remains the most premier and essential value and driving force behind true change, be it political, economic, social, technological, agricultural, and so forth.

Second, a true innovative drive for human resource development in particular is absolutely necessary. China is one of the clearest examples of this prioritisation. According to Bob Wertz, innovation in human capital has become a highly cherished culture and value in China today.²⁰

Lastly, quality research and development (R&D) remains the most reliable panacea not only for poverty reduction but also for sustainable development. In this regard, Tanzanians individually and collectively need to make a shift from ignorance and illusion to real innovation. Every year, China educates more than 385,000 new engineers. China ranks second in the world for innovative drive and culture after USA.²¹ In the year 2006, the following indicates the amount of US dollars

¹⁹ Reinhardt, Ulrich, *Future Expectations for Europe*, Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2008, 73.

²⁰ Wertz, Bob, *Gigant China. Das Geschäft mit der am Schnellsten Wachsenden Wirtschaftsmacht der Welt*, Aschau: Klaus Oberbeil, 2008, 112.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 114.

directed toward R&D in developed countries: USA, 343 billion; Japan, 130 billion; and China, 115 billion.²² The skills and competencies of human capital do not simply fall from the sky. They are developed, made and nurtured.

Sustaining human and natural resources

The sustainability of both human and natural resources involves a conscientious empowerment of individuals for real change and transformation. This involves more than basic skill acquisition; it involves authentic human development.

There is also an intrinsic interconnectedness and interdependence between the qualities and quantity of human resource and natural resource development. The higher the quality *and* quantity of human capital, the better the integral development.²³

Holistic character formation

First, the fundamental goal of human resource development should be an all-embracing character transformation, achieved through a problem-based learning. This transformation should be taught in the cognitive, affective and (more so) in the psychomotor domains. True character (*habitus*) building and change should be a priority.

Second, holistic education involves the acquisition of a duty-based view of life. That is, it involves the true empowerment of a human person to meet and master the exigencies of life even when the school day is over.²⁴ Such a holistic view of education is necessarily opposed to Mahatma Gandhi's 'Seven Blunders Theory'. That is, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without service and politics without

²² Ibid.

²³ Msafiri, Aidan G., *Towards A Credible Environmental Ethics For Africa. A Tanzanian Perspective*, Nairobi: CUEA Publications, 2007, 104.

²⁴ Gebrehiwet, Robert, *Philosophy of Education*, Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2010, 13.

principles. Briefly stated, *ipso facto* holistic education or human resource building is necessarily tantamount to learning various disciplines and aptitudes, learning for deep change, learning from growth and values, learning for personal self-fulfilment and self-realisation and learning for true socio-economic transformation.

Efficiency revolution and climate justice

First, there is urgent need for a paradigm shift away from the current model of wanton resource depletion. This implies a change in resource efficiency, a higher quality of life, climate justice, compassion, honesty, inclusivity and empowerment of human talent and skills, and investments in academia and ‘think tanks’.

Second, as regards the current challenge and dilemma of climate change, there is a need to develop new ethics models or paradigms for climate change mitigation and adaptation.²⁵ This should include specific calls for climate justice.

Third, ‘Climate justice should be realised between people, countries and generations, humans and non humans and with the earth itself. Climate justice requires social justice. Climate justice includes implementation of the right to development, particularly in weaker economies. Climate justice requires the development of renewable energy and economies of sufficiency inspired by an ethic of self-limitation.’²⁶

Fourth, on a more important note, climate justice needs to be considered a conducive environment, a ‘condition for the eradication of poverty and the eradication of poverty is a condition for climate justice. Climate justice demands the primacy of democratic politics over economics and the embedding of market economies in social and

²⁵ Msafiri, Aidan G., *Climate Change And Mitigation. Rethinking Beyond COP 17*, Durban November 2011, Dar es Salaam: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2012, 42.

²⁶ World Council of Churches, *AGAPE Consultation. Budapest Call For Climate Justice Addressing Poverty, Wealth And Ecology*, 2010, 3.

cultural contexts (further developing the social market economy).²⁷ More than ever before, a new environmentally-oriented developmental model needs to be prioritised: the AGAPE model (Alternative Globalisation Addressing People and the Earth) of the World Council of Churches is a great example for this work.

Globalisation of concern

A preventive and proactive stance developed by Aidan G. Msafiri, ‘globalisation of concern’ is a holistic worldview based on the following Jewish philosophical background: ‘When good people do nothing, evil increases’. Admittedly, globalisation is inevitable.²⁸ It creates great winners as well as great losers. However, when society spreads evil, good people, regardless of their number, need to spread its opposite; that is, the globalisation of what is good, noble, etc. The current neo-liberal globalisation model perpetuates not only the ‘survival of the fittest’ as Charles Darwin termed it, but also the ‘survival of the fastest.’²⁹

There is a particular need to empower the masses at the ‘bottom of the pyramid’, who are denied both their human resource and natural resource rights.

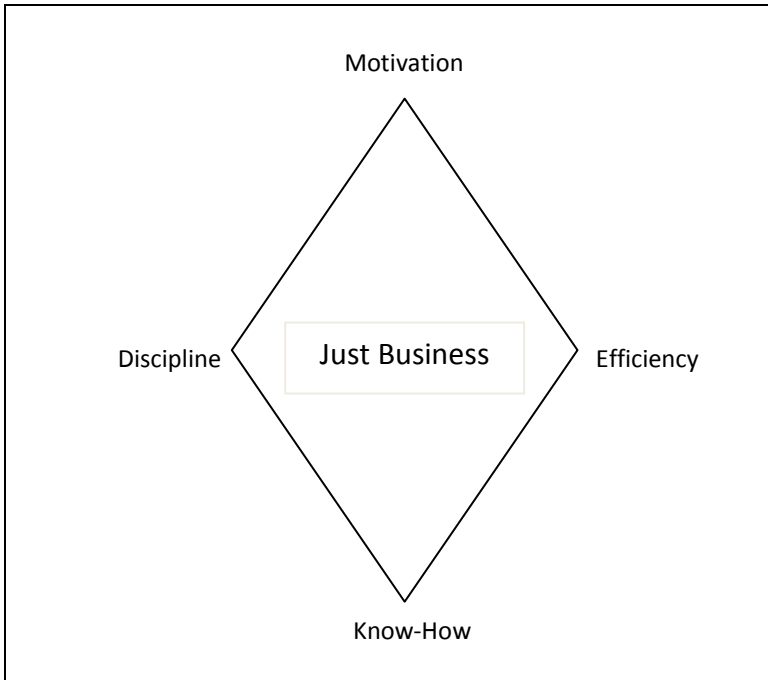
Population	Wealth
A: First World 20 %	87%
B: Second World 20%	8%
C: Poor Nations 60%	< 6%

The Champagne Glass Economy Model

²⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁸ Msafiri, Aidan G., *Globalization of Concern Vol. I*, Dar es Salaam: DUP, 2008.

²⁹ Ibid.



People's well being and happiness

First, there is an urgent need to radically restructure the current illusive neo-liberal economic formula expressed as GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Funnily enough, as John M. Itty argues, GDP increases even when fewer people are employed (through capital intensive technology); GDP grows even when production of guns, bombs, narcotics and liquor increases; GDP grows even when natural disasters occur; GDP grows even when social services disappear; GDP grows even when more peasants are evicted; and GDP grows even when the environment is damaged more.³⁰

There is therefore a need to adopt a new qualitative model, one that shifts from a qualitative mathematical and functionalistic economic

³⁰ Itty, John M., *Illusion About Economic Growth 15*, Kerala: Vichara Books, 2008, 20-27.

paradigm (GDP) to a more human- and dignity-based approach. The Gross Happiness Indicator (GHI), for example, deal with deeper human values and needs such as dignity, quality of life, care and compassion.

Responsible leadership and stewardship

Christopher Stückelberger aptly argues that the Greek word *oikos* is today ‘present in three dimensions: the *economy*, the *ecology*, and the *ecumenism*. The responsible steward cares for the economy as the material basis of life in the household; he/she cares for the ecology as the environmental basis of life in the household; he/she also cares for ecumenism as the spiritual basis for life and its interreligious and intercultural community in the global household. He/she cares, protects, guides, orders, serves and shares on all three levels.’³¹

As a value, virtue, *habitus* (meaning ‘habit’ or ‘character’) and ethos-based view, responsibility is a key pre-requisite for proper human and natural resource management and development. Commenting on the ‘Ethics of Stewardship’ as developed by Emmanuel Asante, Christoph Stückelberger concludes that stewardship is necessarily holistic; it involves ‘stewardship of talents, of time, of wealth, of power, of sexuality, of poverty eradication, etc.’³² This is very crucial indeed.

The good or best practice principle

As the axiom goes: ‘If one is not part of the problem, try to be part of the solution’. The best way to learn from others is by doing. On the national level in Tanzania, the recent Village Community Banks (VICOBA) and the Public Expenditure Tracking Systems (PETs) are re-defining the best practice principle and approach. The VICOBA are increasingly becoming a true vehicle for socio-economic and resource development, particularly at the grassroots level. The PETs are working

³¹ Stückelberger, Christoph/ Mugambi, Jesse N.K. (eds.): *Responsible Leadership*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 2007, 8-9.

³² *Ibid.*, 9.

to curb the mismanagement of resources on the whole. Indeed, experience shows that despite the abundance of natural resources and foreign aid, most Tanzanians still live in extreme poverty. Consequently, the main objective of the PETs approach is specifically to ‘build the capacity of ordinary citizens to track public resources at the grassroots level and to take leaders to account for misuse of public resources allocated for development at community level.’³³

On the global level, then, there is need to implement the development philosophy ‘global thinking, local acting.’ This necessitates the development of a new culture of learning from others. For example, as a developing economy, Tanzania could get best lessons for poverty alleviation and reduction from the BRICS countries. Their socio-economic reform models, especially in human resource capacity building, IC revolution, empowerment of the people at the ‘bottom of the pyramid’, and macro-economic reforms, among others, could substantially reverse poverty in Tanzania as a whole.

A way forward

Undoubtedly, the primacy and centrality of investing in human resources over natural resources in poverty reduction and socio-economic transformation cannot be exaggerated. In this regard, a few yet very fundamental truths need to be re-emphasised. First, as the Swahili dictum suggests: ‘*Ukiona vyaelea ujue vimeundwa*’. There are not magic bullets or miracles or short cuts in our collective quest for socio-economic transformation. Capacity building for skills, technology, competencies, aptitudes, foresight and innovation has always been the powerful engine driving efficient resource use and economic transformation.

³³ Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), *Tanzania, Economic Justice & Accountability Thematic Area*, Dar es Salaam, 2010, 5.

However, it must be well understood that societies have a limited ability to change rapidly. Sociologists agree that social transformation is a rather slow process. This is a challenge to all of humanity. Truly, the large ship of global economic meltdown cannot simply be overcome in one day. Nonetheless, this should not be considered an excuse not to mobilise collective synergy and strategic thinking and action for change.

Last but not the least, it is absolutely necessary to reiterate the need for human resource capacity building as a means to achieve true socio-economic transformation in the following very insightful and formative story:

The King was lucky: the tribes of his kingdom had explored all his lands to bring him great riches and knowledge. The mountain people used their ropes to climb the highest peaks. The river-dwellers built boats to explore tributaries and deltas. And the desert nomads had learned clever ways to conserve water for long journeys. He knew that there were many more lands that might hold greater wealth and wisdom. He issued a proclamation: 'All the peoples of my kingdom shall compete to discover new territories. Those that bring back knowledge and treasure will have half the share!' The river-dwellers were overjoyed. 'With our ships, no one can beat us to the new lands,' said their chieftain. Two months went by, and finally one of the ships returned. But there was no gold or treasure. 'We sighted land, but were running short of water so returned home empty-handed,' said the captain. The river chieftain would not give up though. He went to the desert nomads. 'Give us the secret of water storage so we can try again,' he said. The nomads scoffed, 'What's in it for us?' 'We will give you a third of all the treasure,' he replied and the deal was done. Three months went by before the ship returned. 'We spent a month seeking an inlet,' said the captain. 'But there was none, and we had no way of climbing the cliffs. Our food ran out and we had to return.' 'Let us try, using your boats,' said the prince of the mountain people. 'We can make food last,

and climbing cliffs is easy!’ The King agreed – but the river-dwellers refused because they could not agree how to share the spoils. Years passed. The kingdom grew weary of disputes, and because the tribes spent all their time trying to discover each other’s secrets, they let hunger and disease spread across the land. Finally the King had had enough. ‘I shall lead a new expedition using ships from the river people, we shall take nomads to store our water and mountain people to scale the cliffs. All our skills shall be used – and all of us shall reap rewards from the new lands we discover!’ The mission succeeded. They returned with food, medicines and new allies from the far-off lands.

Moral: In quarrelling about the shadow, we often lose the substance.³⁴ Briefly, this story underpins the importance and precedence of investing in human capital or resource as a key prerequisite and condition for poverty alleviation and integral socio-economic development as a whole. This paper therefore calls for an urgent paradigmatic shift on individual, social, collective, regional and national levels.

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³⁴ European Patent Office, *Scenarios for the Future*, Europäisches Patentamt, 2007, 85.

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