



Initiatives of Change

HARAMBEE
Africa

News from Harambee 5
Ethiopia

DREAM of AFRICA

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Completing the two weeks of training in Addis Ababa, the 18 participants of the 5th Harambee Leadership Program are each heading onto a new phase – some returning to their home countries to carrying forward the initiatives they have conceived, and others to continue on together during four weeks of 'field work' in Ethiopia ending on 30 November. This newsletter brings some highlights from the training period.

Forgive at all Costs

Last week, David and Jane Mills (Australia), who were part of the faculty, took participants through the 'Foundations for Living' Course. The 'great couple', as described by one of the participants, creatively communicated the DNA of IofC and qualities of a responsible and effective leader. Building from inner listening, absolute honesty, unselfishness, love, purity through to identity, they shared with great passion and conviction a series of fine-primed presentations punctuated with stories, sketches, songs, family group sharing and crowned with forgiveness.

'As leaders, we will be expected to be peace-builders and therefore will always encounter conflicts that we should anticipate to resolve,' challenged David Mills. For healing to take place, forgiveness has to be seasoned with honesty, patience and wisdom and simmered with understanding, dialogue and acceptance.

Forgiving those that have wronged us is important. It releases the hold on the past and frees us.



James Wamboga (Uganda) noted that it is humbling how a simple word like 'sorry' can be used to end decades of war and pain in the world. It shows the power of love and humility. The many wars, bloodshed and suffering being experienced in Africa today could be reduced if leaders humbled themselves and apologized for their role in these. 'Fighting does not solve problems; it only aggravates the situation since the loser always wants to fight back and prove a point, perpetrating evil in the end. I am convinced that if I love and forgive then I have made the first step in breaking this awful cycle,' he acknowledged.

Nicholas Onosigho (Nigeria) added, 'Tears that come from

releasing grief and pain show healing. Forgiveness must start from the inside to the outside. I don't have to like it. But if I don't forgive, I should not expect to be forgiven. I am now ready to forgive my mother who walked out on us when I was 13, as well as my sister who followed her. We lived with my dad since and harbored a lot of anger towards her. Even when she had wanted to return at one point, we wouldn't let her. My father died recently and I feel it is time to let go of the past, talk to my mom and bring together our family that has been split.'

The 'I don't care attitude' makes you part of the ongoing hurt rather than the solution. We should seek to offer solutions rather than perpetrate the hurt that comes with unforgiveness and hatred. Holding anger and a grudge is poison that eats us from the inside and not a weapon that attacks the person who harmed us. Let us therefore learn to forgive and let go, at all costs.



Learning to Appreciate

Participants also investigated and challenged leadership, identity, trust and values. Their collective interest in learning about trust was amplified through an exercise facilitated by Nadia Waber, from the Centre for African Leadership and Development in Addis Ababa.. Ms Waber's material included unpacking meanings of trust and how it can be built in relationships, communities and in leaders.



She also shed some light on the theory of Appreciative Inquiry: that 'we learn best from what is working in a situation'. This thinking will allow young Africans to shift their perspective away from 'doomsday' projections on the state of Africa and to the things that make our continent prosper. Young leaders should not only address the challenges but also honor the successes.

Several participants were asked what was working in their countries. Kimanthi Mbindyo from Kenya reflected and responded, 'The role of the Church in Kenya has been reinvigorated and is crucial in fusing the society together; moving away from tribal separatism.' He spoke at length about the ways in which the Church has been able to draw on positive elements of society and promote healthy, ethical values in Kenya. He also added that when good people who are guided by principle and character, act courageously in wisdom, then the course of history can be changed. He reminds us that it is in the intentional use of language that our realities are created. By re-imagining our continent as a place of growth and prosperity, we can begin to tackle our challenges in hope rather than fear.

We live on a continent rich in resource and wisdom. As Africans we should continue to acknowledge and appreciate the overwhelming wealth of culture and heritage found on our soil.



Participants

Nicholas Onosigho (Nigeria), Tongo James (Sudan), Eldoma Dawood Abdalla (Sudan), James Wamboga (Uganda), Mazuba Haanyama (South Africa), Mbindyo Kimanthi (Kenya), Shaneeza Naszeer (Canada), Waratwa Moroka (South Africa), Ndoni Khanyile (South Africa), Mediatrix Masava (Kenya), Tegegnetwork Emishaw (Ethiopia), Fitsum Assefa (Ethiopia), Yonas Dimissie (Ethiopia), Kebebew Ebsa (Ethiopia), Getesh GImasker (Ethiopia), Zaid Hagos (Ethiopia), Warkalem G/hiwet (Ethiopia)