

## **Africa's Yearning for Transformative Social Reengineering** **የአፍሪካ ናፍቆት ለማህበራዊ ዳግም ምህንድስና ለትራንስፎርሜሽን**

The search for social reengineering, which is linked to the socio-economic and political change of the continent, has become a focal point of discussions. The debate also touches on the nexus between African politics, leadership, governance, and development. In order to better comprehend the issues African nations face due to varying degrees of social crisis and their effects. It is helpful to examine these issues from a variety of perspectives. Consequently, it is vital to explore the connection between the nature of politics, economy, and governance throughout the postcolonial era.

A society is not at all a phenomenon that is static in any way; instead, it is organic and dynamic in nature at the same time, and it is always open to new developments. What makes a group of individuals into a society is their ability to interact with one another in accordance with a set of norms, standards, and normative principles that they all hold in common.

Every society is distinct due to the fact that it practises its own culture in its unique ways. Certainly, it's not just Africa where people adhere to a unique set of cultural norms and beliefs. Despite the fact that African nations have various cultural and societal standards within the country, however, there are many commonalities throughout Africa.

As an example, cultures can be categorised based on their predominant economic activity, such as "hunting and gathering," "pastoral," "horticultural," "agricultural," "fishing and seafaring," "industrial," and so on. However, because of societal breakdown, poverty, and unemployment, African civilisation is experiencing a rise in a variety of negative behaviours.

The critical question is, what steps might we take to forestall a social breakdown in Africa and its subsequent crisis? The breakdown of society exemplified by the decline of institutions and the increase in crime, violence, and loss of cultural identity and socioeconomic complexity?

A significant issue is still on the table for us as concerned citizens, and we need to take immediate action before the situation unravels before our very eyes. We are experiencing economic stagnation, political upheaval, a surge in unemployment, the absence of an acceptable standard of living, crime, religious fanaticism, and widespread despondency.

In this regard, there are two fundamental gaps that need to be evaluated: the first is the competence of the leadership, and the second is the misappropriation of national resources. The first one is the competency of leadership, which is connected to the ability to govern and move society forward. In other words, society pays a terrible price on many fronts when its leaders lack the necessary talents and moral rectitude to serve in the highest positions of authority.

The second one is the misappropriation of funds, clientelism, and corruption, which have all affected African countries and horrified society to a great extent. In short, if national project funds

have been misappropriated or proper preparation has not taken place, then someone will be homeless, the road will be in disrepair, medical facilities will run out of supplies, and schools will lack the materials they need to function.

Where did we went wrong as human beings and, more significantly, as Africans? Why can we not harness and capitalise on our continent's plentiful natural resources, industrious people, hospitable climate, and rich cultural traditions? How did we sink to the very lowest rung of global society? Who is accountable for our collective socioeconomic failure and societal misery? What should be done to get out of these never-ending loops? When is a good time to think about these social and cultural problems?

I came up with these questions because, with a few notable exceptions, the situation in most African nations is quite comparable to one another. And these questions will assist us in making a concise diagnosis of the education and governance systems. The disparity between Africa's resources and poverty level prompts the question: are resources a curse?

I refer to it as "*a myth of mineral resource*," which is the reason why a natural resource without proper institutions and marketplaces within Africa does not make any sense. African nations are at the mercy of global market forces rather than having any say in producing or distributing their mineral commodities.

As an alternative, a situation in which African countries have a natural resources export sector that generates enormous profits for the government but paradoxically leads to economic stagnation and political instability. How can one explain a circumstance in which Africa should desire a different strategy to alter this reality? It's a term often used to indicate the unfavourable economic effects of extracting non-renewable resources like petroleum and minerals. The resource curse is the paradoxical relationship between economic growth and the availability of natural resources.

### *How May Africans Adjust Their Thinking to Account for These Truths?*

In Africa, the discourse concerning Afrocentric social reengineering and the transformation of entrepreneurialism in the local context has yet to begin. There are shreds of evidence which demonstrate the gap in this regard. Social engineering need to encompasses both the bottom-up and the top-down governance methods of influencing desired mindsets and actions among social entrepreneurs. Public, private, and non-profit organisations all share in the duty of shaping public opinion and behaviour to achieve specific societal goals.

The expression and idea of societal reengineering have been appropriated for use in this setting; in this sense, it is an operational concept of reconstructing, revitalising, and energising. It is imperative to implement benevolent efforts and scenarios based on enhanced individual performance in fields such as education and development. The ultimate objective, then, is to affect a fundamental,

systemic change in society in accordance with a philosophy that is both indigenous to the local context and authentic.

It's common knowledge that some African countries are home to 'prestigious' educational institutions; others have formal tertiary education. Each of these institutions turns out a sizable number of qualified graduates each year with expertise in a wide range of fields. Obviously, this begs the question of how these educational institutions have impacted society and responded to pressing social concerns. In addition, we need to ask fundamental concerns as a culture, such as what constitutes knowledge and how it differs from qualification or certification.

Of course, one can argue that the purpose of education is not to fix current societal problems but rather to gain philosophical understanding and effect change over time. Despite this background, can we still say that postcolonial Africa sees "light at the end of the tunnel"? There is a Chinese proverb that gave me sense and explained the scenario in one phrase "*To know and not to act is not to know.*"  
By Wang Yangming.

Education for Africa is a one-way ticket out from the current state of affairs and toward change and transformation. Africa, however, needs top-notch education that will serve as a catalyst for the continent's development. A shift from an agrarian to an industrial and service economy will be necessary, and the educational system should be planned accordingly. The educational opportunities and challenges of the coming decades will heavily influence the continent's economic and political trajectory.

The education sector in Africa is essential to the continent's efforts to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution and related ICT initiatives. There have been several waves of innovation in ICT within a relatively short time frame, and most African countries have yet to be able to stay up or reap the benefits of this rapid change. It is not so much that today's leaders need a deeper understanding of ICTs in education as they need to demonstrate how they intend to integrate and transform the socioeconomic development of African countries in this knowledge era.

Africa should gradually engage in a socio-economic and political transformation that enables citizens to take control of their destinies through a functional shift in African state architecture and to establish a people-centred unity. As the foundation of institutional system transformation, the well-being of ordinary people must be prioritised by making the African economy sustainable for sociocultural gain. The institutional transformation to be valid requires making homegrown that belongs to citizens, and the representation system and the mandate need to establish transparently and efficiently.

The reverse or absence of societal reengineering is poverty, unemployment, criminal activities, conflict and other social ills. Social engineering is both a bottom-up and a top-down method that influences specific attitudes and social entrepreneurial behaviours at a variety of levels. Specifically,

the obligation is often performed by governments but also carried out by media, universities, or private organisations, to generate the desirable attributes in a target population.

Last but not least, in order to restore African social and cultural healing systems, social reengineering is an essential component. It is of the utmost importance to curtail and minimise homelessness, maintain fundamental infrastructures, fix potholes, stock medical facilities, and give educational institutions the resources they require to function properly. The most intractable problems in Africa can only be solved with new, systemic approaches, and here is where "transformational social reengineering" comes in. Technology and social entrepreneurship are essential for social reengineering to have a transformative effect on the socioeconomic value creation landscape.

*Seife Tadelle Kidane (PhD)* is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Pan African Thought and Conversation (IPATC); Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Johannesburg.