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# HENSON HERALD

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**EDITED BY LUCI BALL**

We now have an intern to do further research into AI and publishing. Mohammad is from Staffordshire University and with us until mid-June and I am hoping another book will be the fruits of the research.

Friday May 13<sup>th</sup> we are holding a Coffee Morning in aid of Ukraine and all donations will be sent via Christian Aid. Read all about it on our Facebook page.

It's good to hear from Sadat who will be contributing an article to Henson Herald and Debbie McAndrew who will write again later in 2022.

After Easter preparations will start for Summer School which will be face-to-face as well as virtual. The fee of six pounds for the Summer will be charged and an exciting concoction is planned.

The LBF at Olympia on Wednesday was an inspiration and we are on the edge of our seats to find out if the Rights to any of our backlist have been purchased. See picture for Luci Ball and Daniel Goodyear at the British Museum.

**Malcolm Henson (MD)**

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# POEM FOR APRIL

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**Excerpt from:*****The Waste Land*– T.S Eliot**

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers.  
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee  
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,  
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,  
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.  
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.  
And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,  
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,  
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,  
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.  
In the mountains, there you feel free.  
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

(Read the full poem for free at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47311/the-waste-land>)

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# A STORY OF KENYAN YOUTH

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*By Thangavelu Vasantha Kumaran*

The first time I was in Kenya, I was an international student at the Kenyatta Institute of Administration in Kabete, a suburb of Nairobi, in 1981. As part of my study in a group of 24, from African, Asian and Asian countries, I spent nearly 6 months (November 1980-April 1981) in Israel, at the then Settlement Study Centre, now the Institute of Development Studies, at Rehovot, 20 km from Tel Aviv. The SSC was near the Weizmann Institute of Science and diagonally across the Faculty of Agriculture. I had 8 Kenyan classmates and they were a third of the class and were mostly employees of the Department of Planning. We were in Kenya to prepare development plans for the districts of Nakuru and Nyandarua as part of the one-year regional planning course.

My second visit to Kenya was in November 2017, after nearly 37 years. What I saw in 1981 and 2017 was a great contrast. In 1981, Kenya was a young country under the Moi Government, a one-party democracy. The tallest building in Nairobi at that time was the 39-floor high rise with a helipad on the top. In 2017, it was the Kenyatta Government, full of controversies and social and economic struggles. The one important change everywhere was that the skyline of the cities and towns had changed but most villages and small towns were very much the same as before except that most people had mobiles in their hands, and communication was good across the country and the world.

The greatest change I could ever notice was in the youth of the country, in schools and colleges and universities, English speaking besides Swahili and at least one other major tribal language. In 1981, what my Kenyan friends told me about social life matched with the reality I could see. One thing all my friends told me then was that they might not go back to their wives and children. And, they were not sure of them waiting for their return from Israel after about 6 long months. And, they told me that the Kenyan society was a permissive society, with a nomadic history and youth villages, where young boys and girls lived together until maybe they found their partners. That was true, too.

In 2017, I did see a sea change in Kenya, where there was great concern for the youth. And, strikingly, all the wild animals were moved into the National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. The scenery of 1981 where I saw wildlife of all kinds, miles on end in the open, the literally thousands of deer I saw, along the road to Nakuru then, just about 30 km out of Nairobi, disappeared completely. I was indeed quite upset about the change but was able to see wildlife in the Samburu National Park, in the open and very large numbers. I saw a river infested with crocodiles alongside the National Park and spent two nights on the right bank of the river, in the Samburu Game Lodge.

## 1. The Kenyan Youth

Kenya has a youthful population as the latest data from the census 2019 by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) reveals. In this case, 35.7 million Kenyans (75.1%) are below 35 years, while 32.73 million (68.9%) live in rural areas. The total urban population makes up 31.1% of the Kenyans, totalling 14.83 million. Nairobi city ranks highest in urban population with 4.397 million, Mombasa with 1.208 million, Nakuru 570,674, Kisumu 440,891, and Eldoret 475,716.

## 2. The Kenyan Education

The 8-4-4 system of education was geared toward imparting appropriate skills to enhance self-employment. However, due to the high costs, poverty, and lack of facilities, there have been high, high school dropout rates. Most of the youth either drop out of school or graduate without the necessary skills for self-employment. Many girls drop out of school due to early pregnancies.



Plate 1. The Samburu Boma women, colourfully attired and in a dancing mood.



A Map of Kenya and a political map of Nyahururu Region.



The country's training institutions are also either inadequate or lack the essential facilities and technology to prepare students for the challenging market demands. Recently, sub-standard training institutions have come up to take advantage of the shortage of training opportunities to exploit desperate youth. In most cases, there is no linkage between the training institutions and either the formal or informal (jua kali) sector. The youth trained in these institutions cannot, therefore, be immediately absorbed into the job market.



Plate 2. Nyahururu town

### 3. Drug and Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation

The early-mid 1980s saw a rapid growth in crime, drug, and substance abuse among the youth in Kenya. Alcohol, cigarettes, khat (miraa), and cannabis Sativa have remained the most popular abused substances in the country. There is a fast emerging trend of injecting drug use, especially narcotics. Moreover, abuse of drugs is highly associated with the risks of contracting HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases, especially among the youth.



Plate 3. Drug abuse program – One Love Kenya Trust (OLKT)

Violent criminal attacks, including rape, mugging, armed carjacking, and home invasions are increasingly being associated with the youth these days. Over 50% of convicted criminals are young people aged between 16 and 25 years.

Leisure, recreation, and community service are important for the psychological and physical development of the youth. It contributes to their personal development by promoting good health, personal discipline, leadership, and team-building skills.

It also provides an opportunity for appreciation, participation, and creative experience in leisure, music, art, dance, drama crafts, novelty events service, and cultural activities.

This helps engage the youth to make good use of their leisure time, express their beliefs and values as well as promote and preserve local art and culture for the benefit of the future youth.



Plate 4. Curbing drug addiction – The Bible Society of Kenya and Rehab Centres in Kenya – RehabPath Africa

However, current investment in leisure and recreation has not reflected its importance. The sector suffers from inadequate funds and facilities while the talented youth lack motivation and are often exploited by organizations. Due to these constraints, it has not been possible to tap fully the talents of many youths.

The categories of youths with special needs have been identified as unemployed youth; out of school youth; female youth; youth infected and affected by HIV/Aids; street youth; physically, and mentally challenged youth; and youth in difficult circumstances. One such organization trying to find solutions to the problems of the youth is the moral foundation. They try to do the following to improve the lives of the youth:

- Develop policies that will address unemployment problems and create an environment where the youth can exploit their potential through value-adding initiatives.
- Be a catalyst for youth empowerment and participation.
- Collaborate with other stakeholders to research and come up with policies that would assist youth in this country overcome the challenge of crime, drug, and substance abuse among the youth in Kenya.
- To take advantage of benefits associated with ICT to foster youth development.
- Help the youth to be able to work towards the realization of their life goals that were hindered before by the tough regulations that in the past barred them from accessing credit facilities from financial institutions.

There are other programs of assistance to youth and this article speaks of two such programs/initiatives in Kenya, towards rehabilitating youth and helping them to find a respectable place in the community.



Plate 5. The colourful culture and the roaming rituals. An act of cultural preservation in Kenya.



Plate 6. A Kikuyu traditional wedding in Kenya



Plate 7. A colourful Masai girl in traditional dress and beads at Ukunda



Plate 8. A romantic destination for Kenyan lovers/couples and the Thayu Farm Hotel at a Youth Village



Plate 9. Relationships that prove love can last Youth Village in Kenya

#### 4. The Kenya Women Rising Program

The Kenya Women Rising program is an immersive transformational leadership program that changes lives through capacity building that comes from within. The program is designed for women who are leading change to achieve gender equity around the world.

The purpose of this program is to enable participants to gain skills that enable them to rethink their vision, shift from delivering predictable results to extraordinary results, breakthrough barriers to reach beyond their goals, become leaders who have a hands-on steering wheel, co-creating with others to make an impact on the world.

The program consisted of a residential session from February 05 to 10, 2017 and a follow-up coaching program for 3 months. This add-on is designated to support women,

particularly youth, with the implementation of their vision, and offer the opportunity to practice newfound skills in small peer groups.

The Kenya Women Rising Program brings together leaders from multiple sectors. The exchange of diverse ideas through conversation and experience contributes significantly to mutual learning within and beyond the curriculum. Each participant is expected to come up with a vision at the beginning of the training.

This vision is shared among the participants, and each time the participant is required to restate her vision and see if it is still the same or it has changed. By the end of the program, each participant has a vision, which she is required to give a period of implementation. During this time, she is working with her mentor and other mentees in her group.

After a self-introduction and welcoming remarks by the facilitators, the training was officially opened by the Vice-Chancellor of Egerton University. Each participant stated her expectations and her vision as the other participants listened generatively and gave suggestions for improving the visions.

It was noted that all their visions were broad and general. The women needed to rethink them, make them short.

Lesson learned: Be your own, everybody else is taken.

### **Monday: February 06, 2017**

Participating women were asked to come up with a symbol that represented the idea behind their vision. In groups of two each, participants were able to discuss and relate the symbols to their visions. Each partner presented the other's vision to the entire group. This exercise helped in improving their listening skills. In listening, they could agree or disagree. One listened to familiarize with whatever they were hearing and also to maintain their stay, hence one should not personalize whatever they were listening to. And, avoid judging while listening. In the afternoon, there was a talk by Sarah Richson on mentorship strategy.

### **Tuesday: February 07, 2017**

Participants expanded and explored their visions further. It was noted that many times their future was guided by their past. This workshop was designed to make them forget the bad past that chained them down and looked into their new future. Participants were able to share some of the past experiences that drew them back, and the turning points that took them to the new future. These diverse and emotional experiences helped the participants in narrowing down their visions, and also give their visions a focus. In the afternoon, there was a talk by Sabore Ole Yiewo on the role of men against FGM in Narok. Sabre's talk exposed the participants to the importance of advocacy skills.

**Wednesday: February 08, 2017**

Participants were exposed to some of the barriers and breaks that came into one's life, and how they needed to break through them to achieve their goals which were well stated in their visions. It was realized that some barriers were invisible and hence the need to break through them without losing one's identity. Leadership among women was discussed and the discussion resulted in the following:

A leader should learn to give power to her vision and self, and not to the barriers/breaks around oneself. One needs to create context and operate within it. Paint your picture, and then you can invite people to help you improve on it. For one to break through the barriers, one must own the power; one must permit themselves for them to be able to break through. The power is in us, hence we should control it.

In the afternoon, Patricia Sewe gave a talk on 'Mimi ni Change'. Her talk emphasized that '*Change begins with us*'.

**Thursday: February 09, 2017**

Participants were put in groups of four and were assigned mentors, who were to take them through the journey of actualizing their visions for 3 months after the residential leadership course. Together with the mentors, the mentees were able to discuss and sharpen their visions.

Using the mountain top model, participants were able to give themselves timelines for implementing their visions. Agnes Leina of the Kenya Anti-FGM Board was able to take them through the afternoon session with a very informative talk on how she rescued Maasai and Samburu girls from FGM and early marriages. Participants then rehearsed for the closing ceremony which was meant to be the epitome of their one-week residential program.

**Friday: February 10, 2017**

The participants recapitulated the week's proceedings and reaffirmed their visions. There was an emotional candlelit closing ceremony for the participants. The participants spoke their visions to the guests and panelists. This was followed by a one-day conference which was characterized by panel presentations and discussions from various guest speakers.

**5. The Vision of a Woman Participant**

- I envision a world where University male and female students are safe.
- I commit to mobilizing 20 young mothers in three months
- I commit to gender sensitising 20 young mothers and 20 young fathers in six months

- I commit to having an operational day-care for 20 innocent children by the end of the year.

## 6. The Student-Mothers' Project at the Laikipia University 2017

The Student Mothers' Project began a year ago (2016). In this, the University people are engaged in *preventing pregnancies in young students* who are enrolled at the university for a program of study. To this end, they have a Gender Club organized at Laikipia University.

In the Gender Club, they have 'Coffee Hour' discussions, in which they discuss sexual relationships and research on the theme with the student team. They also have discussions with the student mothers on post-pregnancy care and how to take care of the babies.

The students who become pregnant while in a live-in or other kinds of relationship are kept away by their families (parents) and also the communities from which they hail. As the mothers and fathers are students, and they have no formal employment or income, they cannot live together by renting accommodation.

It happens that the student-mothers are invariably shunned by their mothers. They do not teach them how to take care of the baby, breastfeed it and also look after it. They do not even bother as to whether the student-mothers have eaten or not.

Therefore, the University has an arrangement in the care centre (although the daycare centre has not been set up as yet, there are some activities carried out regularly while the student-mothers attend their classes) that two of the student-mothers look after the children left there by the student-mothers attending the classes. Those who attend the classes share their notes with the student-mothers who look after the children. They not only share their notes but also study together, thus helping each other.

The *'fathers of the children* do not have money because they have no jobs. Also, they are often students themselves. Their parents also do not help them in their distress. Hence, they cannot get married and live a family life because:

- No money;
- No employment;
- No Government support;



Plate 10. Participants, their mentors, and facilitators on the last day of the conference

- No parental support; and
- No money to spend on hospitalization either.

Government support is available only after the completion of their education. The Government gives loans and they must be repaid once they get jobs. So when there is no money, a problem arises as to ‘where to stay’.

The University has now given a building but organizing the Day Care Centre is the responsibility of the Centre for Gender Affairs. The CGA has to find the money to buy the equipment and supplies. Most student-mothers are undergrads.

Those student-mothers who come to the Day Care Centre must bring their children (to the Day Care Centre) and not leave them elsewhere. When the children are with the Day Care Centre, the student-mothers could visit their children at the Centre and also breast-feed them if necessary and play with them for a while. The student-mothers could also concentrate on their studies while the children are here.

- At the Day Care Centre: There is micro-investment to generate income, and there are projects for generating income for them as well.
- There is study and work. Seven hours of study means less money but classes are often reviewed and are attached with seminars to help make money.
- The student-mothers make 300 Ksh an hour.

But this is not for every student-mother. Rather, the University provides the opportunity based on merit. Hence, the CGA is planning to bring investment projects.

The most worrying problem in Kenya today is that the children are dependent on their parents. There is a lack of money in most families, too, and hence students are very constrained. Also, they get into more problems when pregnancies happen in relationships between boys and girls.

Girls with year-old children are afraid of coming out in the open and there is no support from their families either. Parents are however worried about them, all the time, unable to help them. There is no counselling from the Government to help delay pregnancies in young women. Hence, in the Day Care Centre, the staff encourage discussions between boys and girls on sexual relationships. There is some help from the health / medical care services of the Government.

The boys and girls of the University come to study from outside but on counselling being given they go away to stay outside. They do not like the CGA advising them on talking a long time to boys/men or telling them to get back to their rooms as early as possible in the evenings. Because they do not like such advice, and also because of their families’ poverty levels, they want to stay out and stay together with their boyfriends in live-in relationships.

This arrangement is most preferred because girls can cook and boys can give a little more money for food but the pairs share rent. This is perhaps the reason why the girls fall pregnant early in their young ages



Plate 11. The kinds of daycare (indoor facilities: cradles and beddings) planned for at the Day Care Centre of the Laikipia University main campus

Also, the landlords and landladies do not impose any rules or regulations while renting rooms. All they want is the money they get from the young couples.

This is where the University wants to help the young boys and girls and prevent as far as possible early pregnancies and the problems that ensue.

## 7. The Daycare Centre at the Laikipia University

The Laikipia University has set aside, munificently, a building for the setting up of a Day Care Centre at the main campus of the University. The Centre for Gender Affairs' Coordinator Sheila Wandera has already taken training to set up, run and manage such a centre. The Day Care Centre is expected to be functional in about a year (2018). The



Plate 12. The model of the Kids' Creche planned at the Day-care Centre

University is looking for funding for the proposed Day Care Centre, particularly for equipment. The Centre will be named HYMA (Help Young Mothers Advance) Day Care Centre.

The management of the Day Care Centre, when complete, aspires for a sleeping space for the children within. They also wish to have an eating place as well as a multipurpose room in it. They want to develop an outdoor play area as well as the Day Care Centre.

**Acknowledgement.** Professor T. Vasantha Kumaran is thankful for the support from Laikipia University, particularly from Professor Wanjuki Chiuri and Professor Sheila Wandera, and also from Dr N. Annammadevi.



Plate 13. The Kids' Creche (right) and the Outdoor Play Area for the Day Care Centre

Plate 14. TV at the Senators' lunch at the Laikipia University, Kenya



Plate 15. TV, Sheila, and Annamma at the Samburu Game Lodge, happy in each other's company

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# LBF (LONDON BOOK FAIR) 2022

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## **NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE PRESS AT THE LBF ON WEDNESDAY**

I left Stoke on the 1012am train to Euston and meet Daniel Goodyear outside The British Library before heading to Olympia where we spent a fantastic afternoon with a variety of publishers including the History Press and ELT.

We had some interesting chats and hope to hear more in the future.

We had a Press Card and our London based editor of Sky Stoke distributed the e-magazine from LBF.

The exhibitors were full of helpful information making the day very worthwhile. The Professional Association of Publishers were lobbied about the Council election taking place this month.

The current voting system despite the claim of inclusiveness is anything but democratic and favours the mega companies at the expense of the minnows. I have been nominated for Council but understand I will not have a cat in hells chance of election so the Northern Powerhouse as well as levelling up are just dreams for small and micro businesses hence my rant.

Wednesday was a great day overall and after lockdown a very sociable event and chance to reconnect. I arrived home in Stoke at 930pm and without doubt the benefits far outweighed the costs.

**Malcolm Henson (MD)**

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# MOHAMMAD SAJAD YASEEN INTRODUCTION

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My name is Mohammad Sajad Yaseen and I am a business management student at Staffordshire University.

I am starting an internship at North Staffordshire press Henson Editorial service.

In this Internship, I will be working with the Managing director as a research assistant.



My role in this internship is to research books that are written by local authors in Staffordshire and authors in America. Information from the research will be used to meet the goal of the project which is to help the authors to compose books in suitable language to approach new and more audiences and overall to maximise sales.

This is AI project that will operate for 12 weeks and my expectations from this job are to get new experience and develop important skills such as researching that would help me in future jobs.

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