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Critical Noises »Searchers Unlimited 2015«

Addis Ababa



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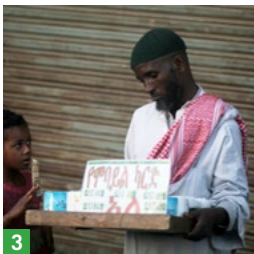
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A starting point



Katrin Seegers,
Director
„Searchers Unlimited“



Uli Post,
Director Policy and External
Relations and Director
„Searchers Unlimited“

Since its founding in 2012, “Searchers Unlimited” has been in movement, constantly looking for new perspectives on life. When we planned our 2015 gathering in Addis Ababa, we had a faint notion, that our “open” and “experimental” character would be taken to a new level, challenging ourselves to even more openness. We were not disappointed.

As we wrote in our programme leaflet: “Fifty years after its invention, development cooperation needs a new lease on life, perhaps radical changes and a new position in Western societies – beyond pity and technical explanations. This is why we need Searchers Unlimited.” We were looking for views from individuals who have special skills or experience in other fields or systems; from individuals who have the ability to convince and mobilize people beyond traditional pathways.

We were hoping to open our minds and gain new perspectives on matters that had seemed so clear until then.

And it is this openness that we shared, that inspired us and that made this “Searchers Unlimited” to a unique moment.

We did not receive ready made answers to all our questions or to all questions that came up during the days in Addis. But we went home with a bag full of ideas, suggestions and questions. We learned to look at certain problems from a different and new angle. We also learned that it can be very, very easy for open minded personalities from many different countries to discuss complex issues at eye level – in spite of different backgrounds, age, and individual experiences. Last but not least we learned more about future prospects of 3D-printing, the governance triangle and the European illusion of completeness.

Welthungerhilfe in general and we in particular are grateful to you. Grateful for the time you spent with us, grateful for your contributions to our debates and grateful for the friendship we could make with you.

We are confident you will enjoy reading the following pages and keep them as a piece of memory.

Katrin & Uli

19 participants from seven countries

Bernice Dapaah

Ghana
Bright Generation / Ghana
Bamboo Bikes



Sileshi Demissi

Ethiopia
Musician



Alemayehu Diro

Ethiopia
Ethiopian NGO-
Platform



Anke Domscheit-Berg

Germany
Consultant, Digital Activist



Prof. Dr. Peter Eigen

Germany
Founder of Transparency
International



Amelie Fried

Germany
Author and Journalist



Dr. Hendrik Groth

Germany
Editor-in-Chief of the
"Schwäbische Zeitung"



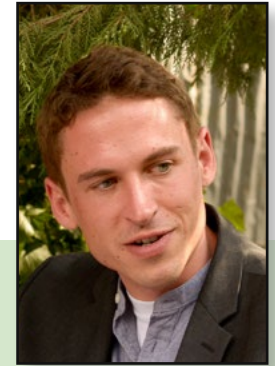
19 participants from seven countries



Dr. Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi
Ghana
Professor of Political Science
University Ghana / Executive
Director Ghana Center for
Democratic Development



Prof. Dr. Lars Harden
Germany
Professor for Mass Media
and Communication
Managing Director



Alexander Herholz
Germany
Communication Consultant



Bahati Kanyamanza
Democratic Republic of the Congo
COBURWAS International
Youth Organisation to
transform Africa



Christina Kufer
Germany
Law Student, Journalist



Prof. Dr. Francis Nyamnjoh
Cameroon
Professor of Social Anthropology
at the University of Cape Town
and novelist



Rejoice Ngwenya
Zimbabwe
Writer, political activist

19 participants from seven countries



Peter Probst
Germany
Screenwriter



Hans Rusinek
Germany
Student at the London School
of Economics



Guy Wouete
Cameroon/Belgium
Artist



Prof. Dr. Gesine Schwan
Germany
Professor for Political
Science
Founder of the Humboldt-Viadrina
School of Governance



Dr. Papa Sow
Senegal
Social Researcher
University of Bonn

Moderators



Markos Lemma
Ethiopia
Techie



Reyhana Masters
Zimbabwe
Journalist



How different or similar are the lives of 19 people from eight countries who were to spend the following two days together?

We were curious and asked our participants to bring a picture or symbol that would portray what is currently moving their societies. And we asked them to share their thoughts while wandering around the garden. The not so surprising outcome: We are all moved (and troubled) by the indisputable inequality.

"Completeness is an extravagant illusion." (Francis Nyamnjoh)

WHAT MOVES US?

We share a lot!

1. The desire for justice moves us

The justice of chances – for example, the chance to have the opportunity to offer the kind of education that many people cannot currently access.

2. The phenomenon of solidarity moves us

Those who are privileged should be the first to show solidarity by not appearing as superior and by showing humility.

3. The power of technology moves us

Technology has the power to change lives. In a world where people can do more and more things from the comfort of their own homes, technology will transform the future.

4. The issue of governance moves us

Security should be a priority for good governance. Wars and conflicts are a result of a lack of understanding.

5. The lack of information on Africa moves us

Africa is mostly represented in the news by hunger and conflict. *“We find out a lot about how an African dies and not how he lives.”*



“Act more, think less.”



“The desire of justice (of chances) is what moves us.”

“People are often sceptical, when it comes to using new technologies and this is an area where we need people to start thinking differently.”

“Some barriers have been removed such as the wall between East and West Germany, there still remain many barriers in the world that need to be demolished.”

“Africa is what it is today because of dictatorship. Good governance is needed to ensure development and food security.”

What moved us



Mathias Mogge,

Agricultural engineer and environmental scientist.

Since 1998 at Welthungerhilfe, formerly worked locally in development cooperation and from 2010 on a member of the Welthungerhilfe board.

Migration can have positive and negative sides. In Europe often the rather negative aspects are discussed. But people do not consider the severe brain drain for African countries. I was impressed by a statement of one thinker suggesting to compensate African Countries for this brain drain. This rather unusual idea may not be realistic but it is a good example for a change of perspectives in order to understand other realities and put our often strong opinions in relation.



Michael Hofmann,

Born in Cuba.

Master of economic science and since 2012 marketing director of the Welthungerhilfe.

When we put **“solidarity”** as topic for discussion on the agenda, I would have expected the discussion to center on solidarity of European countries vs. Africa. I couldn't have been more wrong: Most of the discussion centered on solidarity among African nations (or rather the need to increase it) and on the concept of solidarity in general. A very interesting input from one of the participants keeps resonating with me until today:

“beyond empathy, solidarity entails the willingness to bear sacrifice or cost for somebody else”.

And that means that solidarity goes beyond charity and that any activity based on solidarity should therefore include advocacy as an integral part.



Clay huts and slums – The picture of Africa drawn by German mass media

An analysis by **Lars Harden**

Photos: **Daniel Rosenthal**

What do the German media make us think about what moves Africa– which pictures are conveyed? To be more precise: I will show you which picture of Africa is drawn by the German mass media.

The shortened perspective on Africa in our eurocentric and ethnocentric media needs to be discussed in my point of view. It might even be an opportunity for players like Welthungerhilfe: more than ever, they can be the experts for the underrepresented subject matters of African nations and become a more important dialogue partners for German editorial departments?

We all agree that the set of problems is way too big to deal with it in a substantial way in that short spell. In addition, we all know there is no “Africa” as a homogeneous construction as much as there is no “Europe” as a big community of shared values and interests.

Nevertheless, I will try to highlight four assumptions:

- 1. The picture drawn of Africa is over-simplified.**
- 2. Illegal immigration to Europe is seen as a big threat.**
- 3. Wars and conflicts dominate media coverage.**
- 4. Diseases and famines – coverage oscillates between compassion, fear and resignation.**

I will try to give a brief overview of the current results of research, refraining from personal comments at this point. The four theses reveal issues that German media coverage of



Lars Harden

I am Professor for mass media and communication at Hochschule Osnabrück. Since 2003 I am Managing Director of a company dedicated to communication research.

Africa stress quite regularly. Doing this I take the perspective of a communication researcher, referring to academic references from my subject area with emphasis on results from the last five to ten years.

The Picture drawn of Africa is Over-Simplified

The picture painted of Africa in German media is rather homogeneous. Countries are rarely differentiated. Northern African countries and the “Arab Spring”, first of all in Egypt, are the sole exception. Africans south of the Sahara are still presented as poor and in need of help. Problems in African states are depicted as if the citizens cannot solve them by themselves. Attributes like **“the poorest of the poorest”** who live in **“clay huts and slums”** underline the dependency of Africans and their supposed state of underdevelopment (Beck et. al , 2012).

»It's a pity that – again – we have to see pictures like these from an African football stadium. Barbaric acts of vandalism and unprovoked violent attacks.«

Since Germany is very enthusiastic about football we could see almost every match of the Africa Cup live on TV. The excesses during the semi-finals between Equatorial Guinea and Ghana were commented on TV similar to this.

„It's a pity that – again – we have to see pictures like these from an African football stadium. Barbaric acts of vandalism and unprovoked violent attacks.“

As if such scenes are typical of Africa, and not – of Football... Even the football world cup 2010 in South Africa is considered as a missed opportunity of presenting Africa in a more differentiated way. The media denounced a whole continent as **“irrational, archaic** and repellent”, for example when they referred to superstitious beliefs of players, coaches and fans (Meier & Steinforth, 2010). Security risks were exaggerated by the media and attacks in Angola mentioned as reasons to boycott the world cup in South Africa—even though Cabinda and the nearest stadium are 2.800 km apart (Wachter, 2010).

Illegal Immigration is seen as a big threat

Though the number of immigrants from Africa takes up only a small percentage of all immigrants to Europe, they dominate the public discourse about illegal migration to Europe. This is for two reasons: On the one hand, we can consider a (subversive subliminal) hatred of foreigners, on the other hand the media report disasters happening in the Mediterranean Sea in compassionate way. **The rather xenophobic frame expresses the fear of Europe being invaded by African immigrants.** Immigrants are portrayed as a danger to the mid-European societies. Researchers are afraid that this type of media coverage fuels public discourse on how migration can be combatted in general. Even the quality press tends towards framing **“migration as a threat”** (Mbappou-Gleiß, 2008).

The media disregard the fact that the main share of migration from African states takes place within the African continent. Furthermore many immigrants to Europe are highly qualified.

Discourse analytical studies find that German media tend to reflect their government's opinions and the European Union's policy of defense and control. Nevertheless there is commentatorship that migration is seen as an opportunity (Assopgoum, 2012).

The more compassionate frame tries to point out the inhuman conditions under which refugees are brought to European borders by criminal people smugglers. Last Thursday more than 300 refugees died at the coast of Lybia. Probably most of them came from the Sudan. We find intense media coverage, discussing political implications and **reporting the fates of the people as accurately as possible.** Here the problem of illegal migration via the Mediterranean Sea is seen as humanitarian problem that has to be solved by the European Union. Especially Italy suffers from inappropriate regulations for **European borders.** Hence, Italian media report much more about immigrants from Africa than German newspapers do. (Fohrn, 2009, S. 98)

Wars and Conflicts dominate media coverage

News factors like negativism, crime, corruption, crises and violence seem to be the reasons why German media emphasize wars and conflicts in Africa, although many African States live in peace (Sorge, 2014). For Western media it does not seem to be attractive to shine a light on political development in African regions. Foreign correspondents do no longer work on the spot but only come to Africa in case of present crises. Even the German quality weekly newspaper ZEIT closed its office for the sub-Sahara region. **Disinterest in Africa by German media and society in general lead to a distorted image.** The bad conditions under which correspondents have to work makes coverage more likely to be based on negativism (Mücke, 2009). So-called parachute correspondents often have a very euro-centered perspective on conflicts and locals are not able to get a word in edgeways.

Media coverage serves to perpetuate differences between “the West” and “the Others”, which means Africa or Africans. These classifications are seen as a product of the **historically based balance of power**. Wars in Africa are often conveyed as “black against black” whereas wars in Europe are never framed as white against white. Former findings show that from **about 50 %** (Mücke, 2009) **to more than 80%** (Dilg, 1999) **of media coverage on Africa is classified as negative**; and most of this deals with military conflicts.

Diseases and Famines—From Compassion to Fear to Resignation!?

In the end I will keep this point very short and give you a quote: „If we take our cue from the images in the mass media, then too often we learn everything about how an African dies, but nothing about how he lives. (Mankell, 2006)”

During the last months, we have seen intense media coverage of the Ebola disease in Western Africa. Journalists have enunciated a lot of compassion. But nonetheless the media also

focused on how and when the virus would reach Europe and Germany and whether we would be well-prepared in terms of medical equipment and knowledge.

Emphasizing diseases is typical of media coverage of Africa, since it supports the frame of an underdeveloped continent. This was also the case when AIDS was a major topic of the daily news. The repeated images of starvation and misery might be responsible for a desensitization of the public. In addition, this might even inhibit people’s willingness to support aid agencies. Furthermore the public might see development aid as useless if media coverage focuses on diseases and famines only (Sturmer, 2013). Thus, the media potentially activate a stereotyped dichotomy of the global society in **merciful givers** (here) and **thankful takers** (there).

Mainstream Discourse vs. Elite Discourse

Personally, I am convinced that the German media have a very limited view of Africa to offer. Moreover, I have given you a brief impression of what the mass media in general tell us about Africa, what they maintain we should think about the continent. The reasons for a rather pessimistic view of the continent are multifaceted. One of them is the work approach of the mass media. Others may be discussed today and tomorrow.

To be fair, I have to add that you can find very sophisticated articles, films, programs and blogs that tell us about growth, a spirit of optimism, a vivid arts and culture scene, literature, sports and everyday life in Africa; and there is a self-critical discourse about Europe’s neglected colonial history.

However, I would rather call all this an elite discourse that takes place in elite media or scientific journals and not in large radius mass media. The positively framed issues do by far not have the coverage that the points I have mentioned above do have. They exist, but the negative topics are the media mainstream. I am looking forward to opening up new vistas.

1 Conflicts, diseases and famines - The picture of Africa in German mass media is over-simplified, says Prof. Dr. Lars Harden.

This text is the written version of my key note held during the “Searchers Unlimited –Think Tank in Addis Abeba” on 16th February, 2015. It is not a complete review of the scientific discourse but in outlines it represents the discourse.

»If we take our cue from the images in the mass media, then too often we learn everything about how an African dies, but nothing about how he lives. (Mankell, 2006)«



1

The danger of western superiority fantasies

Workshop in Ethiopia

A report by **Amelie Fried**

Photos: **Amelie Fried; Annette Hornischer**

Amelie wrote down her experiences, thoughts and feelings in three articles for the Welthungerhilfe Blog. For this documentation we have translated and shortened the text and put it together to one copy.

In the Ethiopian capital city Addis Ababa, at the headquarters of the UN in Africa and the African Union, the think tank participants discussed the future of development aid, the meaning of solidarity and the self-image of people from the South and the North.

Mid-February 2015. In the dawn light, **Addis Ababa** floats before us. Houses and huts seem to grow out of the clay-coloured hills, forming a strange, sprawling structure, dimly lit by tiny spots of light. A magical sight. **On the ground the disillusionment sets in.** The journey from the airport to the hotel reveals the earthly aspects of the city: apartment blocks sat beside corrugated iron huts, well-built streets alongside bumpy tracks, **lots of traffic, dust and dirt, people everywhere**, carrying several bags or parcels,

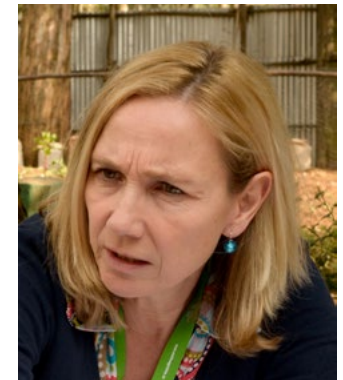
wearing colourful, often shabby clothing. The impression of poverty jumps up at you, the contrast to the world from where we come is striking.

For me, it is a first visit to **Ethiopia** and I have read a few things beforehand in preparation, including “The Emperor” by **Ryszard Kapuściński**, a portrait of the legendary emperor Haile Selassie, Iwanowski’s “Reiseführer Äthiopien” (“Ethiopia Travel Guide”) and “The White Man’s Burden”, a critical look at development aid and the fight against poverty written by the long-standing World Bank economist **William Easterly** who, with a simple example, shows what is going wrong:

“On 16th July 2005, the American and British economy managed to deliver nine million copies of the 6th Harry Potter novel to eagerly awaiting fans (...) It is heartbreaking to know that global society has found such an extremely efficient method of bringing light reading to affluent adults and children, but is not in the position to transport a 12 cent drug (against malaria) to dying children.”

[Translated from “Wir retten die Welt zu Tode”]

This quote becomes my constant companion on this journey, a **parameter for the meaningfulness** of what I see and experience.



Amelie Fried

I am an author and television presenter. In February 2015, within the context of the think tank “Searchers Unlimited” I travelled to Ethiopia.

The first evening meal takes place at “Grani di pepe”, an Italian restaurant that could be at home in Florence. During the aperitif in the garden, **Tobias Schulz-Isenbeck** welcomes us on behalf of Welthungerhilfe, and from this moment, **the gap opens up between the two worlds** in which our group will now move: Our protected world of good hotels, restaurants and well-maintained meeting locations on the one side, and a world full of poverty and no prospects on the other. An ambivalence that causes me a **guilty conscience** the entire time, although I know that I cannot remove it.

My partner at dinner is the internet activist **Anke Domscheit-Berg**. She explains to me the technology of **3D printers**, something that I have, until now, believed to just be a craze for childish computer nerds. She puts me straight and I am astonished: With 3D printers you can produce not only car parts or entire huts for homeless people, but also prosthetics for landmine victims and numerous other, useful things that I never dreamed of. You learn something new everyday.

The next morning, **Eyerusalem Gedlu** welcomes us to our meeting venue, Ababas Villa. After many years in the USA, the Ethiopian has returned to her homeland and has turned her home into a lovingly-managed guest house, with the motto “Love, Peace and Respect to All!” **We feel immediately at home.** In the garden, a “think tree” waits for the results of our discussions, and after the welcome and a round of introductions during which we meet the two moderators Reyhana (Zimbabwe) and Markos (Ethiopia), our work begins in two groups with the question:

What moves us?

My conversation partner is **Francis Nyamnjoh**, an anthropologist from Cameroon who teaches at the University of Cape Town and works as an author and journalist. We establish that we actually do the same thing, only that Francis is a professor “alongside”

and I am a TV presenter “alongside”. We talk about my **desire for more justice** and his **belief that it is possible to change things with very few resources**. Terms like **self-determination and dignity** come up, and we have already arrived at one of the basic problems of development policy: **the danger of Western superiority fantasies**. We expand the group by two participants and quickly fill large sheets of paper with our thoughts and ideas, which we present to the whole group at the end.

In this way, in constantly changing constellations, over the following two days we discuss a range of topics within **migration, economy and solidarity**. We ask the question of what actually is a developing country (“Aren’t we all developing countries?”), we talk about the difference between migration and mobility, the self-perception of refugees and the difference between smugglers and escape helpers. We talk about the question of how true solidarity is expressed (it has to “cost” something), about the terms immigration and assimilation (and the associated expectations), about resource control and economic redistribution, the question of whether more or less economic growth would be better for the world, about **“good governance”** (or the lack thereof).

The hitlist of the most popular phrases is headed by: **“Completeness is an extravagant illusion”** (Francis Nyamnjoh), followed by, “Where are the women here?” (Anke Domscheit-Berg). The two most unusual suggestions come from one of the oldest and one of the youngest participants: **Alex Herholz** suggests that **private property should be subject to an expiry date** – if it is not invested in the economic cycle it should become valueless after a certain amount of time. And Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, the authoritative political science professor from Ghana, surprised the group with the idea that, for every African refugee, Western countries should pay money to his/her country of origin, to balance the “brain drain”. I imagine how German politicians will explain this idea to the participants of the Pegida rallies and have to smile.

1 The danger of Western superiority fantasies was hotly debated by the think tank in Addis Ababa.

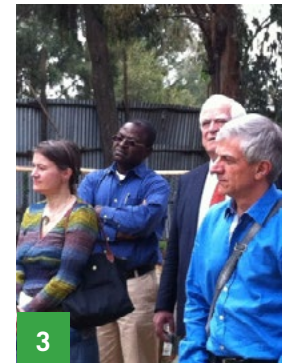
© Amelie Fried

2 The think tank moderators

©Amelie Fried



3 Many intelligent minds networked together at the think tank in Addis Ababa this year. ©Amelie Fried





At the start of the workshop the message was given that all thoughts are permitted and there are no “wrong” ideas. In this open conversational climate, new and unconventional thoughts arise which, for the Welthungerhilfe staff too, evidently fall on fertile ground.

After two days of intensive thought and discussion work, the majority of the group makes its way to the **south of Ethiopia**. Before the start, we visit a group of young entrepreneurs in the centre of Addis Ababa, who present their ideas to us. For me, the most impressive one is a mobile application that brings together jobseekers and employers – not by internet, which is not yet available nationwide, but by **SMS**. The newly-constructed building and its residents radiate a **spirit of optimism and innovation**, you can imagine how much potential is hidden in this country and its young population.

Our trip to Langano is another **experience of contrasts**: A five-hour bus journey on a (predominantly Chinese-financed) wonderfully constructed road, broken by numerous emergency stops by the driver, who skillfully avoids running over donkey teams crossing the road, runaway goats and parent-less roaming small children. We pass by various forms of suffering and I catch myself observing the primitive clay huts at the edge of the road as quite picturesque. **Poverty can be so photogenic**.

After a lunch stop at a lakeside full of exotic birds, we reach the Langano Africa Vacation Lodge, likewise idyllically located by a lake whose water seems to have a reddish hue, due to an accumulation of certain minerals, and creates an attractive contrast to the blue water of the pool. Once again, the surroundings seem to me too nice for our project, visiting the poorest of the poor and, at the same time, after the heat of the journey (the air conditioning in our bus is broken) I am grateful for the comfort the lodge offers.

A young Ethiopian PhD student presents the **water project** to us, with the help of a video, and we get to know the local men and women who have taken on the administration locally. I begin to comprehend how fundamental the problems are here: Countless children die every year from **diarrhoeal** diseases caused by unclean water. The project is about bringing water from the source into the villages, without contamination taking place either while drawing the water or on the way.

A simple task, you would think. In reality, almost a **cultural revolution**.

Along with the clean water, **basic hygiene knowledge** must also be delivered, which is largely unknown in the villages. That you don't relieve yourself in the street, but in latrines (which first need to be built). That hands need to be washed. That the containers must be cleaned before you fill them with water. That certain forms of contamination cannot be seen by the naked eye, but still pose a threat to life.

The following day we visit a village where there is a new water supply. For me, it is a glance into a completely new world, I am torn between horror about the poverty, delight about the enchanting children who run after our every step, and shame about the inevitable absurd sight of our group, whose members walk through the area like **visitors at the zoo**. At some point, the journalist in me wins out and I try to photograph as much as possible – in doing so, I don't see a muddy patch and slip and fall into the reddish mud, which in a matter of seconds permeates my skin, my clothes and the leather of my handbag. The children laugh, I laugh with them and I am actually relieved that, for one moment, I am where they have to live: right at the bottom.

4 Addis Ababa – The meeting of the Welthungerhilfe think tank deliberately took place on African soil.
© Amelie Fried



5

„A life changing experience.”

Helpful hands help me up, urge me to clean my dress with the contents of a quickly produced water container, and I feel bad that I am **wasting valuable water** like this. **The people here use an average of eight liters of water per person per day.** In Germany, the per-head consumption is 122 liters!

After visiting the water distribution point, we meet with residents on the grass next to the mosque, where a lively discussion begins about how the administration of the project functions, whether the project will be viable without external assistance, **whether it is legitimate to charge money for water**, or whether clean water is an inalienable **human right**. This is exactly how I imagine an African palaver to be and I am pleasantly surprised how naturally everyone joins in, the women too. That there are so few there, as Anke critically remarks, is explained by the fact it is market day. On the return journey to the bus, I have the opportunity to experience an Ethiopian latrine. Progress has many faces.

Back in Addis Ababa we meet for a final evening meal together. There is an **almost melancholy atmosphere**, the intensive experiences of the last few days have brought us close together. **Gesine Schwan** says a few words of thanks on behalf of the German delegation. She speaks to me with her statement from the soul, that **cultural differences between the German and African participants are much smaller** than probably both sides anticipated. **I can only confirm that.**

The recognition that, as humans, **we are all descended from Lucy** and that there is little sense in searching for differences where there are so many similarities is something tangible in this moment. Likewise, the gratitude to have experienced these eventful days. My personal thanks go to **Uli Post** and Welthungerhilfe, who made it possible for me to have what Anke Domscheit-Berg summed up on Twitter as: “A life changing experience.”

5 The visit to an Ethiopian village became a muddy affair for Amelie Fried.
6 Gesine Schwan, president and co-founder of the HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Governance Platform gGmbH, and Peter Eigen, founder of Transparency International.



6



Most people have come from somewhere to where they are today. Yet, when talking about migration, the Western countries often refer to it as a phenomenon of others migrating to the respective country. When taking a closer look, we realize, that almost every second German family has a migration background.

How can we activate this memory? What can we learn from mutual experiences? Should we rather talk about mobility instead of migration? And if migration is a strategy for a better life, shouldn't we foster it?

MIGRATION

A transfer fee for migrants


Migration is a strategy for a better life. And who are we to judge upon the urge of people to move on? But besides the positive personal effect migration can have, there can be a number of positive effects on a national degree:

Migration can in the first step reduce pressures on the original country. Other advantages of migration can be seen when migrants return to their home country. They can create employment opportunities and bring experience and knowledge. And we know that the ex-patriots are the real development funders – no other organization transfers as much money into developing countries as the ex-pats sending money to their families.

What troubles most countries though, is that it is mostly the well-educated to leave the African continent for Europe, which means a brain drain for the original countries and a brain gain for Europe! “In the West, migrants are accepted by selection, i.e. doctors, nurses and other professionals which in turn harms the less well off countries by robbing them of their highly valued assets.”

So what is Europe afraid of? Besides compulsory humanitarian reasons, the shrinking population of Europe makes it essential to open our borders and increase our work force. And since we are gaining brain, the demand for a “transfer fee” for every immigrant came up.

The best strategy against racism is migration

A pack animal, likely a mule or donkey, is shown from the side, carrying a large, heavy load of sticks and branches. The load is secured with ropes and is piled high, extending far behind the animal. The animal is walking on a dirt path, and the background is a blurred, reddish-brown landscape. The overall scene suggests a traditional mode of transport in a rural or developing area.

In Europe, there is a fear of “foreign infiltration”. Yet, the truth is, that there is an inverse relationship between migration and racism: The more foreigners live in a district, the less racism among the population. And: the highest rates of racist incidents occur where the migrant population is lowest. This obviously means, that we need more migration in order to prevent racism in Europe.

Continuing the discussion, participants stated that not accepting people from abroad – or ‘fearing the other’ as it can be called – is related to self-esteem. Once people have greater self-esteem, the fear of others will disappear. Racism is fear. If we are self-assured, we don’t fear diversity.

Without the concept of borders there is no fear of the other. In this respect, it was argued, the old nation state is outdated.

If migrants feel that they are being used as an instrument then problems will emerge.

Central thoughts



1. Migration should be fostered.
2. Migration depends on the living conditions in the country of origin.
3. Quick and easy legalization will help migrants to be integrated.
4. If good things are done to the migrants there will be mutual compensation.
5. Refugees must have access to education, free mobility and be able to work. There need to be less bureaucracy and they should have real and equal access to society.
6. How about the idea of adopting refugees?
7. NGOs should consider themselves as coordinators and ought to work together in the making of political decisions.
8. Develop a compensation model (“transfer fee”) for every educated African. Compensation could be either financial or technical.
9. We need to develop a new mindset towards those who flee out of economic reasons: Part of the new thinking is to give these people a chance.



Rethinking immigration: challenges and chances

A report by **Bahati Kanyamanza**

Photos: **coburwas.org**

COBURWAS International Youth Organization to Transform Africa was invited to participate in the **Searchers Unlimited think tank 2015** held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I was born in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, during the dictatorial regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, and became a **refugee at 13**. After fleeing to **Uganda** and being separated from my parents, I had to start thinking about how to provide for basic needs, education and health care for myself in a new foreign country. The invitation to attend the Searchers Unlimited think tank held in Addis Ababa was received with a lot of enthusiasm.

“After becoming a refugee in 1997, life changed.”

Like many other children in the refugee camp, I struggled to face new challenges in a new country. These challenges, such as the lack of food, water, health care and education, led us to start COBURWAS International Organization to Transform Africa (CIYOTA). Our aim: to **provide quality education to refugee children** in the Kyangwali Refugee settlement. There were only two primary schools and one incomplete secondary school. Poor learning conditions, lack of scholastic materials, lack of food etc. forced many children to drop out of school. The youth were hopeless, girls were forced into prostitution, early marriages and pregnancies, boys were drinking and taking drugs. We had to do something. We formed CIYOTA to address some of these issues.



Bahati Kanyamanza

I am the co-founder of CIYOTA, COBURWAS International Youth Organization to Transform Africa. Born in 1984 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, I had to flee to Uganda because of political instability in my home country.

»After becoming a refugee in 1997, life changed.«



» *I was shocked to hear my friends from Germany talk about how immigration is a divisive topic in Germany at the moment and refugees are not welcomed by all.*«

When I got an invitation to attend Searchers Unlimited 2015 in Addis Ababa, I realized that on the program, we would discuss about immigrants. This increased my interest because I was going to learn more about immigrants in other countries.

„I was shocked to hear my friends from Germany talk about how immigration is a divisive topic in Germany at the moment and refugees are not welcomed by all.“

This made me think a lot, I started asking myself what would have happened had Uganda not accepted us..., what could have happened to me and the other thousands of refugees in Uganda.

I know **immigrants pose challenges to the hosts**, ranging from socio-economic to political. First and foremost, in developing countries, it is worse. When a country receives immigrants, the population increases, this becomes a challenge to the host

countries because they have to provide **social services** to the new people coming in. Secondly, some immigrants may pose a challenge to **national security**, all these may force the governments to reject immigrants.

„However one thing I have realized, once immigrants are welcomed and treated well, these problems many countries worry about may not happen.“

In certain instances, it is justified when governments put restrictions to immigrants, but again, these restrictions may result into other problems because these immigrants want also to survive and may use illegal means to survive.

I will base my discussion on my experience in Uganda. When we came up with the idea to form an organization, **the government looked at it as a rebel group** that we want to groom. But immigrants

» *However one thing I have realized, once immigrants are welcomed and treated well, these problems many countries worry about may not happen.*«

1 CIYOTA set up local training programmes for small businesses and farmers. © coburwas.org

2 Facilities in refugee camps, such as in Eastern Congo, are basic and it is often difficult to access clean water.

3 One of CIYOTA's aim is to provide quality education to refugee children in the Kyangwali Refugee settlement. © coburwas.org

have pressing issues which, if given space and support from the hosts, they can solve together and contribute to the country's development. Let us take an example from CIYOTA. It employs over 40 people in its programs. In a country faced with unemployment, this is a **contribution to solving unemployment problems**. The organization service providers like those who supply uniforms, building materials, scholastic materials etc. all benefit in so many ways and **contribute to national development** in form of tax.

Secondly, the school the organization has built supplements the existing schools, which is one of the ways to decongest them, and hence providing a **good atmosphere for learning** for both refugee and Ugandan children. In addition to this, CIYOTA provides scholarships to some Ugandan children, who upon their graduation will contribute to the development of their country.

Thirdly, **refugees run their own businesses**. They pay tax and on top of that, refugees are a market for manufactured goods. They cannot survive without them and are hence contributing to the national economy. Many tourists and researchers come to camps to learn about refugees' lives. The publicized work of the researchers helps in national planning and soliciting for support from development partners, which in turn provides support not only to refugees but also to the host communities.

„Immigrants, if well guided and supported and given freedom to enjoy their rights, can be a blessing to the host community in many areas of development.“

It was a useful learning experience to see the work being done by Welthungerhilfe. To me, the **provision of safe water** is something very important and it has been recognized by the WHO as a **human right**, which everyone should be able to enjoy. As a refugee, I have experienced the problems that come with a lack of water. I remember when I had just become an asylum seeker

in Uganda, we spent the whole day walking looking for water. A lack of safe water can lead to so many problems regarding health, education and manufacturing.

Immigrants find themselves in situations beyond their control, they need to be accepted, protected, supported and guided to make sure that they contribute not only towards their wellbeing but also to the development of their host countries.

»Immigrants, if well guided and supported and given freedom to enjoy their rights, can be a blessing to the host community in many areas of development.«

Art work by Guy Wouete

Guy Wouete:

How wonderful it was to be in Ethiopia!! I felt like touching the heart of humbleness...I did meet some intelligent and very motivated people that I wish to have as friends for the rest of my life.



Guy Wouete

divides his time between Antwerp and Douala. He is a video artist, sculptor and painter who also embraces installations and photography.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFN-vdcH54cE



1: Smile of my Daughter, spray paint on wood, 115cm x 165cm, Guy Wouete 2010



2: Le Salon du Deal Divin, mixed-media installation, variable dimension, Guy Wouete 2009 (Part I)



3: Le Salon du Deal Divin, mixed-media installation, variable dimension, Guy Wouete 2009 (Part II)



4 bis 7: Lines of wind I-V, series of mixed-media sculptures, variable dimensions (about 158cm x 30cm x 25cm), Guy Wouete 2009



Migration as an “opportunity”

A report by **Dr. Papa Sow**

Photos: **Grossmann**

Migration is a recurring news topic – but still poorly addressed at international summits like the climate conference in Paris in November and December.

The fact remains that in this mega conference, migration is still the poor relation to the themes on which the “experts” are called to address this relevant issue. However, migration is a recurring theme that comes almost every week in front of the international news. And this raises again the nagging question of the African youth who desperately seeks a way to exit the African continent and taking migration as an “opportunity”.

In a French documentary broadcast in France 2 Channel February 5th, 2005 (“What is France doing in Africa?”), the Malian Human Right activist Aminata Traoré is categorical. For Traoré,

1. High Income countries have no reason to promote and influence politics of migrations and development if they do not find any interest into them.
2. She draws attention to the fact that if, for example, the European borders should be closed against “the misery of the world” (referring to a famous pithy phrase attributed to Michel Rocard, the French Socialist Prime Minister between 1988 and 1991, saying: “France cannot accommodate all the misery of the world”), Europe should not be any more again replicating this same misery elsewhere. The activist attacks what she called the “double game” of the West



Dr. Papa Sow

I’m a senior researcher at the Centre for Development Research, University of Bonn, Germany. Currently I work on the WASCAL project – West African Service Center on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use – funded by the German Ministry of Education. My research focuses on Population dynamics issues with special links to African migrations (Senegal, The Gambia, Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Morocco) and climate variability/uncertainties.

which wants an open Africa consumer of European products, but which should contain its inhabitants at home by super-
vising them with military bases. The French, for example, are present with military bases in Senegal, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire and Djibouti. Americans have also several troops or military official trainers in Africa.

3. For her the rich and high income countries are mistaken when talking to the current African generation, to the new challenges and when referring to the actual period! According to her, Africans are in fact victims of alienation, so that the civilizing mission continues and is perpetuated through the channels of migration policies and cooperation

Africa's young people will mark a historic turning point

Africa, as some people predicted, is the continent of the "future", with strategic resources, large under-explored areas, plenty of energy sources, but especially with the youngest population on earth. Unlike the neo-Malthusian discourse that continues to dehumanize the continent, African youth today

represent a huge potential with which the African continent will mark a historic turning point. The young people that currently Africa is carrying in his veins is actually a scarce resource. They represent the potential electors; they protest in the streets and defeat dictators who are prone to abuse power.

"That youth represents the strong arms that nowadays nourish millions of families struggling in harsh conditions. This youth will build, in a near future, the economic relationships that are now impeding Africa to take off and beyond it will work to build an independent power. This time of truth is in fact a political and socio-cultural vacuum and that will experience a time of crisis."

But after the rain will come the good weather. The same African youth is trying to build a dynamic network of relationships that will connect into formidable business efficiency that will forever mark the World. When one gives with a proven paternalism and disregard, he or she must actually expect to receive back the

"That youth represents the strong arms that nowadays nourish millions of families struggling in harsh conditions. This youth will build, in a near future, the economic relationships that are now impeding Africa to take off and beyond it will work to build an independent power. This time of truth is in fact a political and socio-cultural vacuum and that will experience a time of crisis."

1 Africa's young people will mark a historic turning point.

2 Climate change does have an enormous effect on smallholder farmers in Africa reducing the opportunities of the youth.
© Felschen

3 Children play soccer in a refugee camp. Migration is an issue that climate negotiation needs to tackle.
© Brockmann



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“African reality is much more complex than it appears on paper. (...) and its transformation is full of ambivalence.

Speaking of Africa means acknowledging that Africa is changing much more rapidly than our image of it.”

Horst Köhler, former Federal President of Germany

same disregard and/or to reach a situation into those that were receiving assistance now come to count on themselves.

Reality is much more complex than it appears on paper

According to Horst Köhler, the former President of Germany:

“African reality is much more complex than it appears on paper. (...) and its transformation is full of ambivalence. Speaking of Africa means acknowledging that Africa is changing much more rapidly than our image of it.”

This late “awareness” is however to acknowledge when it comes out of the mouth of a well-known Politician who was/is “very close to Africa” and who led Europe’s biggest economic power after the Cold War. To reckon that Africa, which represents a complex social reality, was treated as an object in the International cooperation/migration negotiations is thus a disclosure of a big stature.

Activation of the hegemonic culture of assistance molded in a pure Universalist discourse development has led to an expropriation of the ideals of the old realpolitik that long prevailed. In the sense that the canons of policies are asserted, the current

migration issues and development assistance seem to be ideal for completing the unfinished expansion of the decolonization project. The mental “coloniality” that still undermine the international migration policy issue, at international level, is expected to continue and could prevail for a long period as any attempt to count the dominant thoughts are marginalized.

4 Africa represents a complex social reality

How do we believe global justice and equality could and should be financed?

Or:

How can we reach growth that raises the average living standards everywhere?

And:

Do we really need growth? Or should we rather be talking about allocation?

These are some of the fundamental questions we approached together.



ECONOMY

Do we need more growth?

Yes, we do!

1. More growth is required because population is growing, which leads to more poverty.
2. Inequality is tackled by more growth.
3. Growth and de-growth are together. It is misleading to say that this is growth and this is not. Growth and de-growth have to be balanced.
4. Growth is needed but more thought needs to be given on how and what one wants out of it.
5. Economic growth brings competition and that is healthy.
6. Energy, education and health care depend on economic growth. If the agricultural sector is not growing there will be hunger. How can it be redistributed without economical growth? Being against growth is an illusion.
7. Unless the means of production or the ownership has changed, growth is needed.
8. Economic growth is needed because people desire to keep their status, the population is growing and everyone needs to be fed.
9. In Zimbabwe, 80% of the working population is unemployed. In order for these people to work, the industry needs to grow.

No, we do not!

1. The world is producing lots of rubbish that it does not need and this is provoked by growth. What is needed is the distribution of wealth.
2. Producing food and growing is not the same. Economic growth doesn't automatically lead to a reduction of poverty.
3. Growth of the economy without functional redistribution methods can lead to decreasing populations – as we can see in the case of Germany.

A new economic setup

What are the greatest fields of opportunity in your society?

- Social market economy to be based on fair competition.
- Market economy that allows intervention and control by society.
- 3D printing technology combined with solar energy.
- Recycling to avoid waste and print solar panel.
- Start-ups for sustainable development.
- Unconditional income
- Create political framework that fosters or enables sharing economy.

Would you set up a code of conduct? If yes, which are the guiding ideas?

“Civil society has to be the guiding force to focus on many issues such as tax havens. Civil society should tackle most of these issues, which include climate change, poverty and corruption.”

“The decision making process must be shifted and NGOs must make the decision while the government leads it.”

“Civil society and NGOs are great benefits but they also break democratic ways without any accountability. They need to shape themselves up and develop a code of conduct.”

Which segments would you invest in?

- Balanced education
- Health
- Tourism
- Infrastructures have to be rebuilt
- No weapons
- 3D printing technology combined with solar energy
- Recycling to avoid waste

New ideas for a new economic system

A background image of a busy street scene in a developing country. In the foreground, several people are walking. In the middle ground, a man in a white shirt and dark jacket is walking towards the camera, looking at a newspaper. To his right, another man in a white shirt and dark pants is walking away. In the background, a man is sitting on a set of stairs, reading a newspaper. There are stacks of newspapers on the ground and a Coca-Cola sign on a building in the distance.

1. Unconditional income because it will solve a lot of society's problems.
2. Equal access to education, energy, health care and infrastructure
3. Precondition: Good governance system
4. Money should have an expiration date
5. Keep or foster natural diversity
6. Share economical services without money, disempowering money, and regulating speculation. The money is to serve people and not vice versa.
7. Equality in society should be fundamental.
8. Equality and political philosophy should be fundamental.
9. We want the market to serve society.

These values should guide us:

- Sustainability
- Liberty
- Flexibility
- Plurality of perspectives
- Justice
- Integrity

What kind of growth are we aspiring for?

"Growth of consciousness is what is needed."

"Growth of sharing is top priority."

"Germany needs to contribute technology and open knowledge that all can use through internet as well as to open the methods of creating solar energy available on the internet."

"No growth shall aggravate climate change."

"To regulate growth there needs to be an expiration date for money so that it will be used and not just accumulated."

"Future economy should consider most importantly the issue of equality not as a distribution factor but a social fairness."

"If one recognises that formal economy is incomplete one can see how it can blend and succeed by combining it with the informal economy. "



How bamboo serves to create local jobs in Ghana –

Young Leader meets Welthungerhilfe Think Tank

A report by **Bernice Dapaah**

Being an entrepreneur is at the heart of who I am. It is in my blood. However, it did not manifest itself until my **entrepreneurship** professor at college challenged me and I decided to take it to the next level.

Challenged by my college entrepreneurship professor for graduates **to create self employment opportunities** instead of searching for non-existing white collar jobs, I teamed up with two other students in the year 2010 to explore what we can do in our own small way to create employment opportunities for young people in Ghana.

The birth of the Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative

Our research led us to explore what possible needs out there that we can contribute our quota to address. This led to the birth of the **Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative** when it was realized through our research that the abundant bamboo found in the Country can be converted to high quality multi-purpose bikes suitable for the high terrain and purposeful for the local needs.

As with any new venture, the **Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative** started as a novel idea which we pioneered in Ghana. It required us to modify existing, well-established techniques and approaches, and connects various stakeholders to form a new system. The major challenge was labor related as there were no existing bamboo bike builders to start with. So we



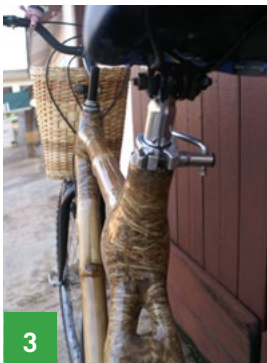
Bernice Dapaah

Guest author Bernice Dapaah is the Executive Director of Ghana Bamboo Bikes. She took part in the Searchers Unlimited Workshop in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.



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had to invest in training highly skilled bamboo bike builders and identify alternative people who could perform the functions of the existing bamboo bike builders. We trained some of our bamboo bike builders with multiple skill sets, so that they can replace other positions for a short period of time when necessary. The other was combining studies with the project and of course with funding. In our part of the world, it is very difficult to raise funding for investments for even tested viable business ventures so for an idea which had not yet been tested at the time it was a big challenge.



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One important thing I believe in is that as an entrepreneur you need to be **self-motivated** and that it is important to understand what your main motivation and goals are so that you can focus your efforts on reaching those goals. You need to be equipped with **optimism, confidence, self-awareness and knowledge** and once you are passionate about the success of your business and you love what you are doing these shall definitely keep you going

no matter the obstacles that come your way.

Young leaders are positioning themselves in tackling the challenges of the 21st century

Within the last decade or so there has been a paradigm shift on the way young leaders are positioning themselves in **tackling the challenges of the 21st century** and as they say some of the greatest leaders are the most unexpected; from the likes of **Facebook** founder Mark Zuckerberg through TOMS boss Blake Mycoskie, who has restored hope to millions of school children all over the world through his one for one shoe giving program to Tawakkul Karman youngest woman and the first Arab woman to have won a Nobel Peace Prize who inspired millions of people around the Arab world to peacefully fight against the dictatorship and discrimination of President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Many young leaders are making tremendous contributions on a range of issues including the impact of climate change, global health, and transparency in business and government and the impact has been profound with unforgettable lessons.



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1 A new and even more sustainable way of riding a bike: Bamboo Bike Type "City" from Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative.

2 Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative produces efficient bikes.

3 A little glance from one of the Bamboo bikes.

4 Women Empowerment: The production gives many women a place to work.

5 Ban Ki-moon enjoys his ride with the Bamboo bike.



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The UN proclaims solidarity to be one of the fundamental values of our century. What does this mean for the way we act and move as global citizens? We took a deeper dive into the nature of solidarity and why it sometimes seems to be more difficult to feel solidary which means: act!



SOLIDARITY

What is the nature of solidarity?

Empathy comes up when we can imagine the suffering, fear, and pain of others.

Solidarity does not stop at mere pity or empathy – it promises future action.

Identification describes the phenomenon of “feeling one” with an idea, a group of people or an ideology.

“Solidarity is not saying one country is right or wrong, it is cause and emotion. It has reflection and in order to be serious it has to be global and include everyone regardless of race.”

“Solidarity implies sacrifice, bearing, discomfort.”

“Solidarity is permanent work in progress. And you cannot succeed alone.”

“Solidarity takes place when something extra-ordinary happens. But it is the many small things that kill most people.”

“The issue of solidarity is reaching a new level.”

“Solidarity has to be cultivated. It already exists out there but lacks the building and nurturing.”

“Individuals and tax payers that fund aid organizations are probably motivated by a sense of solidarity. However, governments and organizations that distribute these funds are probably not.”

“The human mind is only capable of certain empathy. It is difficult to have solidarity with people who live far away.”



» Ideas and scenarios «

What do we mean when we talk about solidarity? With whom do we feel solidarity?

- Whenever I can't act my sense of solidarity becomes marginal. You can also feel it towards a group or extend it to all human kind, Universal solidarity!"
- Feeling solidarity to labour union
- Those who are under privileged join common aspiration, those who are under privileged join common aspiration.
- There has to be a conscious reason to express solidarity. If it is imaginary it is meaningless. There has to be a meaning on who one feels solidarity towards.

Is the work of aid agencies a form of solidarity?

- Deliberate sense of solidarity. When one thinks that they export their own problems then one will realise the feeling of solidarity is gone.
- Any collaborative work one does, as in this gathering, is an example of solidarity.
- Aid Business! The answer is in the question, it is a business. Now the question must be whether if it is still a profitable business or not?
- Individuals and tax payers that fund aid organisations are probably motivated by a sense of solidarity. However, governments and organisations that distribute this are probably not.

Is there Pan African solidarity?

- Many African thinkers create ideas. Therefore, solidarity and the question of Pan Africanism is an abstract.
- Solidarity has to be cultivated. It already exists out there but lacks the building and nurturing. Example of AU and EU tariff negotiation and the common interest to refuse to sign is an indication of solidarity.



Actions for more solidarity

Is solidarity contradictory to eye level interaction?

How can we ensure that solidarity does not impose on countries sovereignty?

If the UN proclaims solidarity to be one of the fundamental values, what are the actions that need to be taken in order to increase solidarity?

- Get rid of the veto power of the Security Council.
- To have refugees made ambassadors of their respective country.
- Removing Africa's debt and allowing it to start from zero is solidarity
- Diversify the economy
- Allow African products, especially farming and primary goods to be sold in Europe without barrier to access and curb on subsidies of European farmers.
- In the west migrants are accepted by selection, i.e. doctors, nurses and other professionals which in turn harms the less well off countries by robbing them of their highly valued assets.
- Empowering people is the most important tool. They must be allowed to think and decide collectively, by knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- NGOs are following the will of the big donors, there is no NGO that is free from either government or groups that support it.

Is there South-North solidarity?

- It is very hard to feel solidarity because of the distance or never meeting one from the other side.
- The human mind is only capable of certain empathy. It is difficult to have solidarity with people who live far away.
- Emotional distance is also the same as geographical one.

- Get rid of the veto power of the Security Council
- Make refugees to ambassadors of their respective country
- Remove Africa's debt and allow it to start from zero is solidarity
- Diversify the economy
- Allow African products, especially farming and primary goods to be sold in Europe without barrier to access and curb on subsidies of European farmers.
- Empowering people is the most important tool. They must be allowed to think and decide collectively, by knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Chances and obligations for NGOs in provoking more solidarity

- Cooperate in governance.
- Behave in a way that considers others.
- Empowering people must be strong.
- To get access to the population, approach European IT students and get them to help African countries with 3D technology so that the developing countries can benefit from the training which is knowledge sharing collaboration.
- The grass root is very important.
- Removal of stereotypes should be worked on from early age.
- Stop MNC from bribing.
- Encourage knowledge based collaboration.

In a nutshell: It is important to advocate for measures against corruption, to abolish protectionist theory, to encourage knowledge based policy, and to encourage 3D technology.



Learning from Africa

A report by **Christina Kufer**

A little walk at the backside of our hotel in Addis is taking us through shanties, along red paths. Children are playing on the roadside, with their clothes dirty from the constant dust in the air. Just a few metres further up the hill, the neighbourhood starts to change. A whitewashed mansion with giant pillars and golden elements shines in the dust of Addis. Two stony lions are guarding the entrance. There she stands, the villa, like a big fat grin. Looking down on the poverty of the others. “God is great” reads the self-complacent sign on the cast-iron gate. This picture of two neighbouring worlds will stick in my mind for the rest of our five-day-trip through Ethiopia.

Welthungerhilfe invited us searchers to this Think Tank in Addis Abeba. We, that’s scientists, artists, students, entrepreneurs, journalists. Most of us wouldn’t consider themselves experts in development aid. So, we haven’t sorted out the master plan for Africa, but searched for new, courageous, undisguised ideas. We were seeking to find out what is moving us, driving us and how we want to live our common future on this planet.

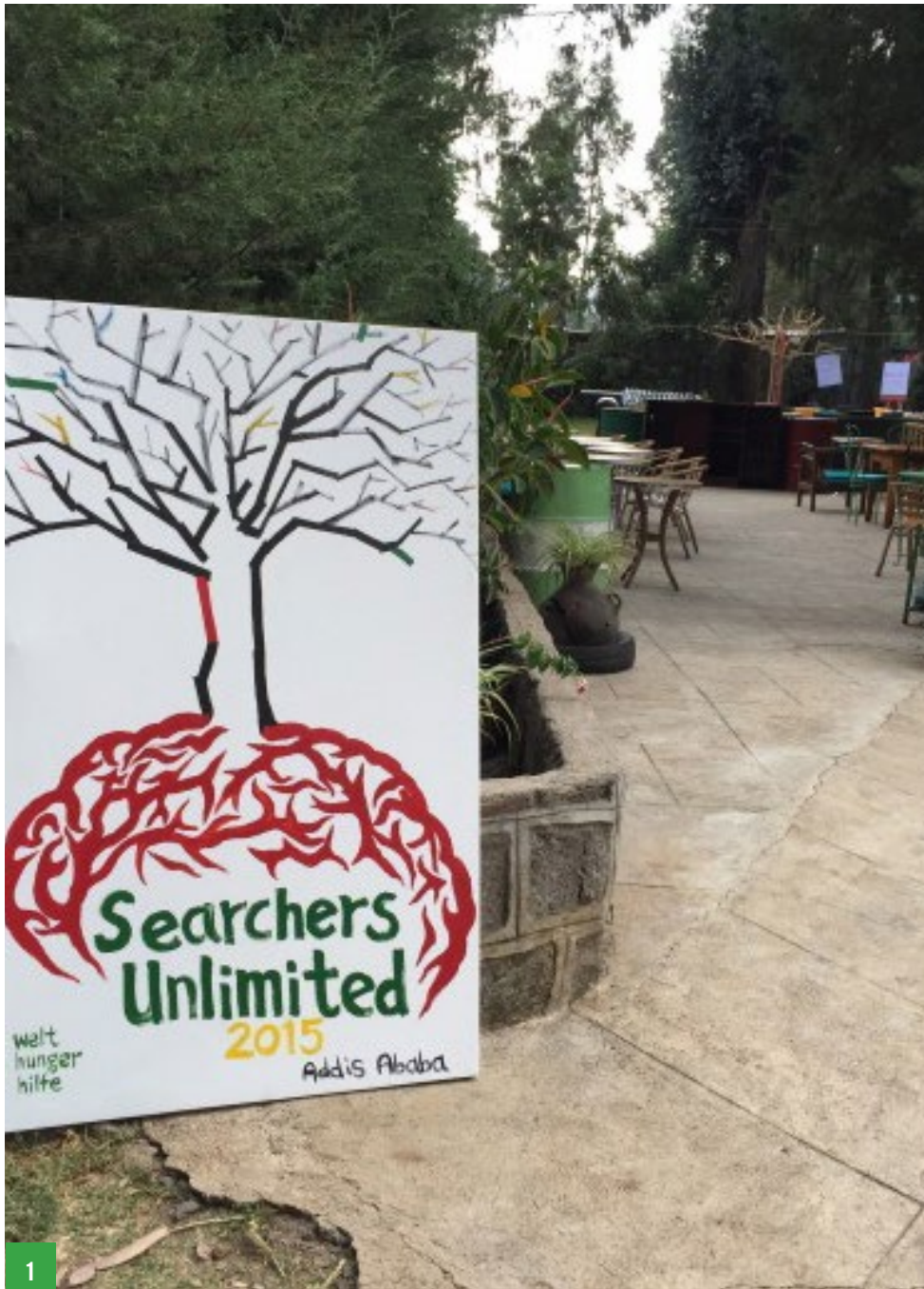
Thus for our first day we picked a topic that is challenging us all and which we come across in both sides of the world: Migration.

Back home in Munich we also talked a lot about refugees during the last weeks. For a few days, the major of Germany’s third-biggest city decided to shut down the facilities for refugees – due to congestion. With 15.000 other people I went on the streets to welcome refugees in Munich, which calls itself “cosmopolitan city with heart”.



Christina Kufer

Guest author Christina studied law at the University of Munich and works at the same time as a journalist at the Goethe Institute. Since 2012, she participates in the think tank series “Searchers Unlimited” of the Welthungerhilfe.



1 This year's think tank was held under the motto: Searchers Unlimited.

2 The first ideas are brought to paper.



I believe that Germany needs to understand refugees as a chance for society. Yet, in our discussions in Ethiopia another aspect came across our minds: African teenagers seeking for hope in Europe are lacking back in their home countries. Are we allowed to benefit from refugees? Or would this only mean some sort of “better racism”?

We agreed upon the fact, that we shouldn't make any differences concerning the quality of refugees. People who come here for economic reasons are deserving the same protection as those who fled on political grounds. Because, bad economy always results from bad politics. The one, who made his way and refuses to

swim along in the swirl of corruption, leaves. The one, who cannot succeed in his own countries thanks to political elites trying to hold down their own people will seek his luck elsewhere.

While we were all eagerly discussing about advantages and disadvantages of migration, one of us didn't really get a chance to speak up: Bahati. The one of us, who has been through it all personally. The one of us who was not only a searcher, but a survivor.

It was only by chance that this evening for dinner I took place next to Bahati. However, his story changed my way of thinking. At the age of 13 he fled from the troubles in Kongo over the border to Uganda, all by himself. The refugee camp he then found himself in wasn't one we would think of. It was a real city with 40.000 inhabitants. “We are all poor”, said Bahati, “but there are the poorest among the poor”. These were the ones he wanted to help. Teenagers just like him who were stood

3 Visiting one of the villages, which are promoted with water projects.



there without their families all by themselves. So, together with two friends he decided to build up his own school, in the middle of the camp, with the little money he had. They made it happen, against all the bureaucracy, against all the pessimism. One could literally say against all odds. What impressed me most, was the fact that there was no NGO at work, but three courageous, strong-minded Kongolesse young men. Do we actually always need help from outside? Or might not help from inside be the more sustainable one?

Yes, we were quite critical on our little journey through Ethiopia. We had some hot-tempered debates (How does the concept of Naming&Shaming get along with the thought of development work on eye-level?) and mad ideas (Should European states pay a per-capita-charge to African countries for every refugee they let in?). But this was exactly the reason we met for. From time to time it helps to scrutinize existing structures.

This journey left me mad, hopeful, sad and happy at the same time. Mad at the owners of the huge rose plantations we drove by, who lead their wastewaters into Ethiopia's lakes. Hopeful regarding the water pipeline saving lives and giving especially the women in the villages the chance to organize their everyday live with other things than collecting water for more than eight hours. Sad because someone like Mugabe is holding his birthday party for a million dollars while in the very same moment Ethiopian children are tremendously happy for a single pen, I brought them. Happy because I have never seen this much of children's laughter in Germany.

Most of all though I came back from Ethiopia as a more critical person. I do believe that NGOs need to start working more with people like Bahati. We can learn so much from them. Let's don't



4 Presentation of the developed ideas.



WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Where to go from here



Katrin Seegers

Dear Participants,

It has been an intense time we spent in Addis Ababa. And some of you have articulated, that in some sense these days have changed your lives or at least your perspective on it.

As searchers we have opened a new chapter of questioning, and of feeling solidary with -- many people in this world: from Greece to Mali to Zimbabwe.

It is the nature of our gatherings that we leave with a restlessness as a result of seeing what yet needs to be moved and having experienced that there are many alike who share the unwillingness to accept the status quo.

We are not alone. We are many!

We would like to exploit this restlessness. And continue the dialogue on how we can stop the dying on the Mediterranean Sea, or how to create an economic system that does not exploit the less privileged. Together we want to take up the challenge of a global governance in which civil society, private business and the public sector work together trustfully.

Let us explore together how to move on from here. How to change things. How to use this spark to start a fire.

We are ready.

Thank you all for participating and sharing. We very much appreciate it.

Uli & Katrin



Uli Post

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