



## What makes African development projects fail?

*An African and an Asian make friends at Oxford before becoming politicians. Years later, the African visits the Asian and is impressed by his mansion, with a Mercedes-Benz in the drive. “How can you afford this?” he asks. The Asian points to a majestic highway outside. “See that road?” he says with a wink. “Ten per cent.”*

*Later the Asian visits the African's home – a palace with a dozen Mercedes-Benzes. Anticipating the question, the African says: “See that road?” The Asian sees only bush. “100 per cent.”*

A 2005 article by Robert Guest, the Foreign Editor for The Economist, uses that joke to illustrate his headline-thesis: “Why has South Korea overtaken Kenya? Because its rulers can limit their greed” <sup>1</sup>.

“In 1960 South Koreans were, on average, poorer than Kenyans. They are now 25 times richer.” Guest concludes, that “the differences must be linked to education”. – Hold it: is an economic pundit just telling us, that some groups of “homo economicus” need “*diligent*” coaching about the rules of the game? Wasn't “economic science” founded on Adam Smith's “law of nature”, i.e. assuming that all agents act in perfect rationality if pursuing their individual self-interest?

“In Kenya, those with the power to hire tend to employ members of their own tribe, no matter how lazy or incompetent they may be. So the pay-off from *diligent* study is less certain” than in “a meritocratic society such as South Korea, education brings rewards.”

If South Korea would be such “a meritocratic society” indeed, how did it happen, that this country is run by a few-family-dynasties<sup>2</sup> (alike Kenya one might add)? Arguably Robert Guest's economic faculty fails to convincingly explain the greed-differences between the two cultures – therefore there must be another, more compelling reason:

Almost 500 years ago the Koreans developed writable letters which allowed them to transfer their knowledge beyond space and time. In stark contrast, Tanzanians started to learn to write Kiswahili in Latin alphabet just about 100 years ago. Until today no reading-culture could be established, due to persistent scarcity of books.<sup>3</sup>

By the act of reading, the individual human mind develops specific intellectual abilities, as common sense, imagination and empathy.<sup>4</sup> By their books, a collective constitutes a higher intelligence which transcends individual space-time, forming a universal continuum.

1 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1493489/Why-has-South-Korea-overtaken-Kenya-Because-its-rulers-can-limit-their-greed.html>

2 <https://www.cnet.com/news/the-chaebols-the-rise-of-south-koreas-mighty-conglomerates/>

3 At least Tanzania possesses an African national language, while Kenya's education system is founded on the foreign language English. Plausibly this might create an intrapersonal distance between the Id and the Super-Ego.

4 “Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind”,  
<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2013/10/02/science.1239918.full>

Arguably a common social identity became essential part of the Korean personality structure. Excessive greed is considered reckless and irresponsible behaviour against the common good – to be sanctioned by social exclusion! Though generations Koreans developed a collective group-think, making – by Freudian terms of psychoanalysis – the individual “Ego” tighten the rein on it's “It” (Id) to promote a social-presentable “Above-Ego” (Super Ego).

African societies simply lacked this necessary incubation-period to acquire the good faith that collective communication and activity might be in the interest of everybody<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, the individual Super-Ego is underdeveloped – essential to act group-conform for the greater good!

In absentia of a strong Super-Ego self-authority, most African personalities are dominated by their inborn “Id”, urging for instant gratification. Any development programme is just well-meant but not well-done, if the beneficiary's State Of Immaturity<sup>6</sup> is ignored out of political correctness. Due to this situation arises the necessity of “a guiding institution to follow”, Immanuel Kant concluded.

As consequence of all aforesaid, EBAFOSA is setting-up an organisation-structure, which transcends individual space-time, forming a universal continuum – to generate and promote a collective mind. By the means of the Digital Age we shall establish our own Collaborative Social Network, based on our own cloud – constantly available to all members by any computer-device – preferably by ours<sup>7</sup>.



**Collaboration:** EBAFOSA implements most efficient tools for continuous coaching and permanent monitoring, in order to assist, encourage and challenge at all times, in order to boost performance, increase production and ensure a sustainable source of income for the scattered living great multitude of Tanzanian citizens.

**Coordination:** Because server-terminal systems function as Panopticon<sup>8</sup>, our EBAFOSA platform constitutes a perfect “meritocratic society” – where proper conduct brings rewards, while misconduct is sanctioned.

The fact that all (pan-) activities in our organisation are under observation (-opticon), enables identification and promotion of talented Super-Egos, who well-implement mission-command.

5 Social Trust as driving force behind economic growth:  
<http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/uncategorized/social-trust-is-one-of-the-most-important-measures-that-most-people-have-never-heard-of-and-its-moving/>

6 “Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?” an essay by Immanuel Kant, December 1784

7 Low-cost, low power, devices without platform-lock-in to Google, Apple or Microsoft.

8 “A new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind”, Jeremy Bentham 1791; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panopticon>

Aware of EBAFOSA's omnipresent “guiding authority”, members will adapt by controlling their own behaviour, i.e. developing sufficient Super-Ego group-think to conform.

**Cognition:** EBAFOSA establishes an online-institute for Lifelong Learning<sup>9</sup> to provide a knowledge-base that underpins all activities the members may engage with. Arguably computer-literacy constitutes the intellectual fundament to knowledge-acquisition – and to Collaborative Intelligence awareness! Hence fostering IT-use and -competence at grassroots-level is imperative for EBAFOSA.

If even the expert Robert Guest fails to fathom the subconscious ground below the surface for a supposed African antisocial habit, how can we expect African understanding about an even more complex cultural challenge like “*ecosystem based adaptation*”?

EBAFOSA's organisation-structure has to be the manifestation of a collective universe beyond space and time – for its participants to experience coordination and exercise collaboration. After teamwork pays-out, members will follow EBAFOSA's principles about team-spirit.

To complete the paradigm-shift can take one generation though – old dogs hardly learn new tricks.



The logo is circular with a blue border. Inside the circle, there is a map of Tanzania with wheat stalks growing from it. The text "EBAFOSA" is written in a semi-circle at the top, "TANZANIA" at the bottom, and "ECOSYSTEM BASED ADAPTATION FOR FOOD SECURITY" around the inner edge.

The President of EBAFOSA Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, 11 January 2017

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong\\_learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lifelong_learning)