

# STRIATHMORE

APRIL 1997



The Job Market in Kenya

Professor Joao de Dios Pinheiro

1996 Graduation

Human Capital and Poverty



## EDITORIAL

Our first issue for 1997 is ready. We ran out of copies of the last issue much to our delight. It certainly was encouraging.

In this issue we have a message from the Principal, Mr Charles Sotz, which is a summary of what he told the College Staff at the beginning of year Seminar in January. This gave us all the targets and the focus for 1997 - teamwork. This applies equally to staff and to students and his message contains a lot of food for thought in our present-day society. To complement this, we are bringing you an article by Prof Gary S Becker of the University of Chicago, which explains how good work habits and values, as well as dedicated parents, go to make up the human capital which represents about 80 percent of the wealth of most advanced countries in the world and how countries which are economic disasters, as he calls them, are usually so because they lack these values, not for lack of natural resources. A challenge to all of us.

We are also bringing you miscellaneous news items of College life, including the College Sports Day which was a great success. The item which put Strathmore in the limelight of the media for a few days was the visit of Professor Joao de Dios Pinheiro, the Commissioner in charge of relations between the European Union and the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) countries. His visit was very pleasant and we think he enjoyed it as much as we did.

In February we had our annual Preparatory Seminar for the UNIV '97 Congress and this too was a success. Although this year we were not able to send any representatives to Rome for the Congress, the Preliminary Congress provided us with a forum to study and discuss the theme of the '97 Congress: **Multicultural Society: competition and Co-operation**, with presentations from the students of the College and some guest speakers.

We would like to thank all those who have helped and contributed to this issue of the magazine in any way, including those who submitted articles which could not be published in this issue for lack of space.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

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The Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution, adopted in London on 16 November 1945, at the end of the Second World War says;

"The Governments of the States Parties to this Constitution on behalf of their people declare:

That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed:

That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war...."

When Strathmore College was founded in 1961 by some members of Opus Dei, under the inspiration of Blessed Josemaria Escriva, it pioneered the integration of A level students in Eastern Africa. The intrinsic equality of people of different races, religions and backgrounds was symbolised in the motto of the College shield: "Ut omnes unum sint" (that all may be one).

In January this year, during the yearly staff seminar, I proposed to the College staff to focus 1997 on team-work. I was not just evoking romantically the College motto or the social circumstances of pre-independent Kenya, I was trying to bring our attention to a fact which I think is still relevant to all the College population: we are fully immersed in an overwhelming individualism which, while very successful in releasing enormous creative power, at some point begins to erode the bonds between people. Its various manifestations, like utilitarianism and the principle of maximising returns, seem to be weakening nations, communities and even the family.

The impression grows that we are witnessing a period of crisis in certain values. There seems to be no value assigned to immeasurable qualities such as rectitude, sharing, mutual obligations and faithfulness, honesty, truthfulness. In short, being upright does not pay any longer; it is not fashionable, not even in the classroom.

The same can be said about quality of work. People have lost the capacity to distinguish between what a person is and what a person has, with the result that an unscrupulous businessman is better accepted than an honest teacher. People must display certain cars, clothes and life style if they want to make an impression on their peers. People must "cut corners" if they want to "make it". All that counts is quick success; it does not matter how! Gone are the days when one would take pride in a piece of work well finished, in an organisation providing a service to the satisfaction of the client, in teachers teaching and in students passing exams because they know... Today, they only valid principle seems to be power and the money you can put into your pocket!

Although the crisis is deep, and seems to become worse with each day that passes, Strathmore stands for those immeasurable values, which we hope to continue putting across to society with the help of all of you: staff, students and past students. In this regard I want you to know that team-work means that you do not stand alone in this struggle: help us and we will help you!

Plutarch reports of Alexander the Great that after a battle, he distributed the spoils of the defeated army among his generals, according to the tradition of the time. One of them noticed that Alexander was not keeping anything for himself and asked him "What is left to you?", and Alexander replied: "Hope".

At Strathmore we have more than that: we have each other.

*Charles Sotz*

## EXCLUSIVE

### PROFESSOR JOAO DE DIOS PINHEIRO - Commissioner for the European Union External Relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries - VISITS STRATHMORE COLLEGE



On the afternoon of Monday 3 March Professor Pinheiro who was on an official visit to five African countries, came to Strathmore College. Strathmore was chosen by the European Union Delegate in Kenya to host Prof Pinheiro's key address in Kenya. It was an honour for the College which is a project of the EU in conjunction with the governments of Kenya and Italy.

The occasion was graced by the Hon Adam Mohamed Noor, MP from the Office of the Vice President, the Head of the EU Delegation to Kenya, Mr Lutz Saltzmann and several Ambassadors and other dignitaries as well as Staff and students of the College.

Prof Pinheiro arrived at the College straight from his flight back from Tanzania where he met Mwalimu Nyerere to discuss the crisis in the Great Lakes Region. He was

met by the Principal, Mr Charles Sotz and as he entered the College the notes of 'Jambo Bwana' and 'Mwana Nyamberi' performed by the College choir welcomed him. Prof Pinheiro seemed to enjoy the singing and even joined in, to the delight of the cameramen.

In his welcoming address, Mr Sotz highlighted the co-operation between the European Union and the ACP countries, and introduced Prof Pinheiro to the audience. Prof Pinheiro is a Portuguese politician, having been the Minister of Education (1984-86) and the Minister of Foreign affairs (1987-93) of Portugal. Since 1993 he has been a Member of the European Commission, firstly responsible for Relations with the European Parliament and with Member States, and is now in charge of external relations with the

ACP countries and South Africa. Before joining politics Prof Pinheiro who holds a PhD in Chemical Engineering, was the vice-chancellor of the University of Minho, Portugal.

Professor Pinheiro started off with his written address saying: "It gives me great pleasure to be here today and to have the opportunity to talk to you on the premises of Strathmore College, which offers a varied range of technical and professional courses for the training of young Kenyans and students from other East African countries. Strathmore College is an excellent example of capacity building through which education and training are linked to the demand of the labour market in the region. I am proud that this centre of quality received in the past assistance from the European Community and I am therefore very pleased to be able to announce to you that the Government of Kenya and the European Community have reached recently an agreement to consolidate the previous investment of the Community in Strathmore College. I hope that this project will help enhance even more the quality of training of this remarkable training institute."

He went on to explain what **Partnership** means, saying "Partnership needs to be worked at, rather than declared", emphasizing that the political aspects of co-operation would feature greatly in future projects due to the link between development and democracy. He said "In a world that has become more globally interdependent no country alone can survive. The policy is 'I want all the friends I can get, because somehow I will need them'".

Later in his address he said "It will be no secret to you when I tell you that there is a malaise affecting the development community, illustrated by expressions such as 'donor fatigue', and a concern in Africa that the rest of the world would accept the marginalisation of the continent." Talking about the crises in the Great Lakes Region, he said "Lasting peace can only be achieved, however, if it is based upon a political settlement. A conference on peace, security and development under UN and OAU auspices should be convened as soon as all

countries involved agree to a multilateral process of conflict management and resolution...."

Talking about the future he said "...the cold war is over, liberalisation in trade is there and interdependence is growing. We have to check if the instruments and principles that guide us are the best to face the challenges of the future. We have to give positive and constructive answers without failing to recognise what has been done properly neither hiding what has gone wrong. ACP countries should take this chance and be at the driving seat and hold their own development plans. They should be ready to explain how the resources have been used."

He concluded with some words addressed to the students of the College: "I always feel that students have an important role to play. They have a special responsibility as they have an opportunity to help the country to be more efficient and more driven towards development. It is good to walk with one's head raised and proud of oneself."

There was then a short time for questions. We wished it could have been longer but Prof Pinheiro had many other pressing engagements, but he had time for a little more entertainment from the College choir directed by the Choir Master, Mr Sylvester Anami.

We then presented him with a gift by which we hoped he would remember his visit to Strathmore. He was given a Masai shield and two spears.

As Prof Pinheiro left we thought back on what he had told us in his informative and entertaining address. Some words he said talking about respect for human rights which seemed to have particular significance for us. Respect for human rights "means equal opportunities for all and merits to those who merit it. We should take care and cherish human rights. This should aim at making a person happy in the society, at work, in a city and indeed in the world. Only the weak has fear of transparency, the strong knows and feels he has the power".

## STAFF NEWS

Here comes the gossip now!

Do you know what has been happening around? I'll tell you including, what has not been happening! I do not know where to begin, but the principle is quite clear: I'll have to begin at the very beginning. presumably, that is since the last report I gave. There we discussed the newly married, the resignations and the appointments! Since then....

We have really grown, especially in the ITC followed by the SES and then by SOA. The administration somehow 'gets the wrong end of the stick', generally called cost reduction or cost efficiency. In any case I plead for clemency if I am not so orderly in my account of the happenings. Let us begin by considering the fact that ITC now have a Director for the Graduate Diploma Scheme or GDS as it is popularly known.

I am not implying that they are now over-directed, but in fact the opposite! Mr Edward Gacheru, a Master in Mathematics and also a Lecturer in the ITC was the one to sit on this chair in the GDS Department. He has already assumed full responsibility and the limit for him may be (as far as I see it) the planet Pluto! (mind you that is because so far ordinary man has not got to know a planet farther than Pluto). The introduction of this post in the GDS Department was flanked by many other Lecturing 'Chairs' before unavailable.

Patrick Shabaya takes on the subjects 'Business Communications' and 'Software Techniques'. A formidable task given that the majority of Kenyans find it extremely hard to communicate in English. Consider for instance the verbiage - Kĩtu Kidogo, sasa!, ni how!, etc. etc.

Patrick is a contemporary of Victor Wajero who has landed himself a job in preparing those wizards they call students in the field of Programming. I have told him several times to avoid a programmed type of

life which invariably a programming maestro becomes in old age. These programmers tend to programme every thing and move in straight lines as though every thing follows logic in life! Be warned! By the way the person writing all this has no clue of programming, so do not take him very seriously.

Oliver Omosa closely followed in and took up the subject 'Systems analysis and Design I and II' He doubles up at home in the Internet connection services. Look up his company and get hooked (I mean to the internet!). Coming to think of it, I haven't spoken of Maurice Ochieng otherwise referred to as "Man Mountain". I guarantee he is. Do not have the misfortune of disagreeing with him on physical matters. He has been practising his power during the Computer Practise Classes and is looking up to further his education soon.

Isaac Ondieki, the only one who can match up to Maurice is 'Beefed' up with "Modern Aspects of Data Processing", another area in the GDS. He takes to Rugby after classes just as a by-the-way and I would like to warn any student who does not do his homework that they may be dealing with 100 horse-power behind those hands! Don't worry, if you do not like him you can switch to "Computer Practice" with James T Kariuki.

James is also working in the MBA Department of the University of Nairobi. He wants to enter more deeply into the field of computers and we have welcomed his unique abilities here at Strathmore. Talking of unique abilities, I think we should shake hand with Mr Kelevelin Kimathi.

If you manage to pronounce his name - Kelevelin - then go to give him a pat on the back! He has just qualified as an Associate of the Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA). What he is doing with the Computer world I do not know but probably wants to ensure he has his feet well set on every field

that deals directly with accounting for money! The Real Stuff, they say...

Well, that's all I want to dedicate to the ITC, even though I know some have been left out. The biggest of all being ... Our New ITC Acting Director ... Peter Oketch Odhiambo... Otherwise Oketch Odhiambo. He feels that OO is much better than POO. I entirely agree with the idea... Ooh! He replaces JB Ochieng (I wonder what all this has to do with fish!) who went to further his Academic perspectives in the MBA faculty of the University of Nairobi. Believe me, he is doing fine there!

Kenrick Miako has just nudged his way in and seems well settled in teaching packages. Especially the Spread Sheets.

Talk of the Devils as they were referred to after the Sports Day. School of Accountancy (SOA) are floating the same number of Lecturers though some new faces are in and some faces out. For instance Miss Immaculate Kariuki doubles up as Course Director and Costing Lecturer. Talk of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake!! She may soon look for the chairwomanship there given all this versatility.

The new faces are Patrick Osoro who is taking on System Theory Analysis & Design (STAD). He is rather quiet and quite systematic. He arrives at the same time as Simon Peter Nkeri. Simon is an Assistant Manager in the Capital Markets Authority and he will certainly impart wisdom on Capital Markets Developments, Vision 2000 and beyond. Anion Muya takes Taxation II.

Last but not least - Paul Mbithi, the new ITC full-time course Director. Welcome! From Moi University with Love eeh! We wish you a good stay here and a good career progression. Welcome once again.

Yvonne Kunyira takes on Tax Framework in ACCA... Kudos for Yvonne! She has also just qualified as an ACCA! I am getting worried about this Maendeleo ya Wanawake!

Olvin De Souza, slightly older here than all the above will continue Managerial Finance. What of Isaac Newton Onyango! The name given to him was well chosen. He

is now a fully qualified CPA without having completed his third year Computer Science degree at the University of Nairobi. I keep on thinking of the rabbit before the carrot! He now teaches Systems Theory and Design in the Full Time Course and does not mince words when it comes to kicking a ball on the field for the staff team!! Congratulations and Celebrations.

Andrew Kerandi said goodbye to young unmarried life just the other day. A quiet wedding and he is now looking forward to be a father of many. Let us call the number n where n is large. We will support him and his beloved wife. Andrew teaches Audit Framework in ACCA. He is also a graduate of the MBA faculty in the UON.

SES wow! Here we come! Miss Lucy Mukuru is one of the new faces. She does not play around with French, Shorthand and Commerce. Her abilities are well used in designing a group of students into the swiftest shorthand per minute stuff you have around. Mrs Salome Onyonka is teaching Commerce, Typing and Shorthand. Talk of preparing ladies to manage the finances and commerce. We have just completed the Ministry of Culture training and believe me Hon Nyiva Mwedwa is doing fine. Let's see about finance now! SES did not want to change the status quo as rapidly as ITC and this is all the gossip we have to talk about .. except for the Lab assistant Stellamaris Muthoka.. ooh I forgot who is helping to keep the computers on their toes.

SES has also grown in Number and in kind. Bravo Mrs Nyoike (the former Miss Jane Mutambah). She has finally said yes.

Admin-wise, let's see now. First of all we have just made a couple. It's an SES-Admin combination. I do not know how it is connected but now, between SES and Admin we have a bond in the persons of the former Miss Rose Omwocha and Mr Wilfred Omwando. We all accompanied them at the Blessed Sacrament Church at Buruburu when they made their final vows to each other. Don't you think that's great? Congratulations to you once again.

by George Njenga

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**HUMAN CAPITAL AND POVERTY**  
by Prof Gary S Becker  
Noble Prize Winner in Economic Science  
Director of the Department of Economics  
University of Chicago

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**IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN CAPITAL**

The main purpose of economics is to understand and to help alleviate poverty, and there is an intimate and transparent relation between investments in human capital and the alleviation of poverty. That is the theme of my presentation.

The term "Human Capital" may not be familiar to all of you. Human capital refers to the skills, education, health and training of individuals. It is capital because these skills or education are an integral part of us that is long-lasting, in the way a machine, plant, or factory lasts.

Prior to the nineteenth century, systematic investment in human capital was not important in any country. Expenditures on schooling, on-the-job training, and other forms of investment were quite small. This began to change radically during that century with the application of science to the development of new goods and more efficient methods of production, first in Great Britain, and then gradually spreading to other countries.

During this century, education, skills and other knowledge have become crucial determinants of a person's and a nation's productivity. One can even call the twentieth century the Age of Human Capital in the sense that the primary determinant of a country's standard of living is how well it succeeds in developing and utilizing the skills, knowledge, health and habits of its population.

It has been estimated that human capital - education, on-the-job and other training, and health - comprises about 80 percent of the capital or wealth in the United States and other advanced countries. Even if such estimates are somewhat exaggerated - and I do not believe any exaggeration is large - these estimates clearly indicate that human capital can be neglected at a country's peril.

The importance of human capital growth is perhaps excessively illustrated by the outstanding records of Japan, Taiwan, Hongkong, South Korea, and other fast growing Asian economies. But they are obvious examples because they lack natural resources - which is a typically greatly overstated as a determinant of economic performance - and face discrimination against their exports in the West. Nevertheless, they have managed to grow extremely rapidly in significant part because they have had a well-trained, educated and hard-working labour force and dedicated parents.

If you look at Korea, for example, all the coal is in North, not South Korea. Prior to the Korean War, North Korea was the richer part of Korea. Today North Korea is an economic disaster, while South Korea is a very prosperous, democratic nation. South Korea prospered, I believe, mainly because it was able to utilize and promote the talents of its population effectively. All the Asian Tigers are highly educated and literate. On-the-job and other training, as well as good work habits and values, support these hard working people.

Every culture has the capacity to produce a successfully developing nation, be it Asia, or Latin America, where we see examples in Chile and possibly Argentina and Brazil. It is not the culture that has prevented Africa from growing, but the policies governments have inflicted on their people. With good policies, there is nothing in African culture to prevent these nations from joining in increasing numbers the economically advanced nations of the world.

Many economists have examined the growth of more than 100 nations since 1950. They have asked, "Why are some nations that started out poor, such as Korea and Taiwan, now fairly wealthy? Why have nations that started out poor, such as Nigeria and other nations in Africa, remained economically stagnant or even regressed? And why has a nation such as Argentina, once

out there, keep moving ahead, you are on the right track.

What qualities help to make an Executive? Well, being reliable, trustworthy, responsible, being able to handle well each job at whatever level, but most of all commitment. Mr Njogu was quick to point out that many young people cannot hold on to one job because as soon as a more exciting offer comes up they are off even if they have been in their current job only for one month. Such instability hinders one's rise to the top.

When selecting a candidate for recruitment, Mr Njogu informed us that the academic or professional qualifications are not the main issue. Personality as well as experience in a relevant field play a major role. An individual may have very high academic qualifications but cannot work in a team, and a lot of emphasis is being laid on teamwork nowadays.

Many Kenyans suffer from work stress. Yet few admit it or are even aware of it. As a senior employee, Mr Njogu gave us the following tips on managing stress:

- do a job you are well suited to and enjoy it
- identify your strengths and weaknesses
- accept when you cannot cope
- speak up about your problems with your employer
- pay attention to your health by getting involved in a sport and eating well.

*by Margaret Kariuki and Evelyn Ngunu (IDPM Part 3/4)*

## KASNEB EXAMINATION JUNE 1996 SOA PRIZE WINNERS AND TOP TEN STUDENTS

In another part of this magazine Wilfred Wachira wrote about his feelings and the feelings of some other people related to Strathmore. When reading it I felt a bit shy at the many praises he poured on the College, however, looking at the list of top students in the June 1996 KASNEB exams and the list of Prize Winners, I felt very proud of Strathmore and of the School of Accountancy. Well done all of you!

### RANK

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING I	
1	DAVID MBAKA MWINDI (PRIZE WINNER)
4	CHARLES KAREITHI MBURU
9	JAMES MUTUMA KIRIMI
10	JULIUS CHEMA MUTERO

ECONOMICS	
2	GLORIA AWOUR OBONYO
3	PETER GITHINJI MWANGI
4	CONSTANCIA MUTILE MUNENE
5	MARTIN KARIUKI GATIMU
10	MARGARET WACHEKE GACHUKIA

TAXATION	
2	ANTHONY WACHIRA MURAGE
4	JOHN MAINA MWANGI
8	MAURICE BARAZA WANYAMBA
9	JOSEPH KAMAU NDUNGU

COST ACCOUNTING	
1	ATHANAS KIPKOECH (PRIZE WINNER)
2	STEPHEN KAMAU MUCHIRI
3	JAMES NDWIGA OSANO

5 CAROLINE WANJA MUNENE  
10 EVANSON WAINAINA KAMAU

**AUDITING I**

1 JOASH CHERUIYOT RONO  
(PRIZE WINNER)  
3 BARBARA GEORGINA OKARA  
4 PETER GITONGA KARANJA  
5 LEONARD THUKU CHIRA  
6 FRANKLOYD KAARIA MWITI  
7 CAROLINE WANJA MUNENE  
9 SOSPETER WAFUBWA ODUORI

**SYS THEORY ANALYSIS 7 DESIGN**

1 PETER KINGORI MWANGI  
(PRIZE WINNER)  
2 DENIS KOOME IMATHIU  
6 WALTER MULIMBA WANGA

**FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING II**

1 WASHINGTON WAITHAKA KIHATO  
(PRIZE WINNER)  
2 ANTHONY MACKENZI MUTHUSI  
3 RICHARD MWANGI WARUGONGO  
5 PETER NJENGA NDUNGU  
6 CHARLES MBUTHIA NDEGWA  
9 CHARLES MUREITHI KARINGE  
10 BERNARD BAGARUKAYO

**BUSINESS FINANCE**

4 JOHN MWANGI THIONGO  
5 DENIS KOOME IMATHIU  
8 MOHAMED SHAHEED KASMANI

**FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING III**

1 KENNEDY NJOROGE MUYA  
(PRIZE WINNER)  
2 TOM ONDUKO NYAKOE  
3 WANGECI GATHINJI  
4 GIDEON GONZI MUHWA  
5 NGANGA THAIRU

**LAW II**

4 CHARLES MUCHAI KAGUNDAH  
6 GIDEON GONZI MUHWA  
9 ROMSON NJERU NJAGIH

**KASNEB PRIZE WINNERS AND TOP TEN STUDENTS BY SECTION**

**RANK**

**SECTION ONE**

2 DAVID MBAKA MWINDI  
3 MARTIN KARIUKI GATIMU  
5 GLORIA AWOUR OBONYO  
7 CHARLES KAREITHI MBURU  
10 PETER MUCHEMI MUCHIRI

**SECTION TWO**

4 ANTHONY WACHIRA MURAGE  
5 JAMES NDWIGA OSANO  
8 MAURICE BARASA WANYAMA  
9 BARBARA GEORGINA OKARA  
10 JOASH CHERUIYOT RONO

**SECTION THREE**

1 DENIS KOOME IMATHIU  
(PRIZE WINNER)  
4 CHARLES MBUTHIA NDEGWA  
7 ANTHONY MACKENZI MUTHUSI  
8 BERNARD BAGARUKAYO  
10 WASHINGTON WAITHAKA KIHATO

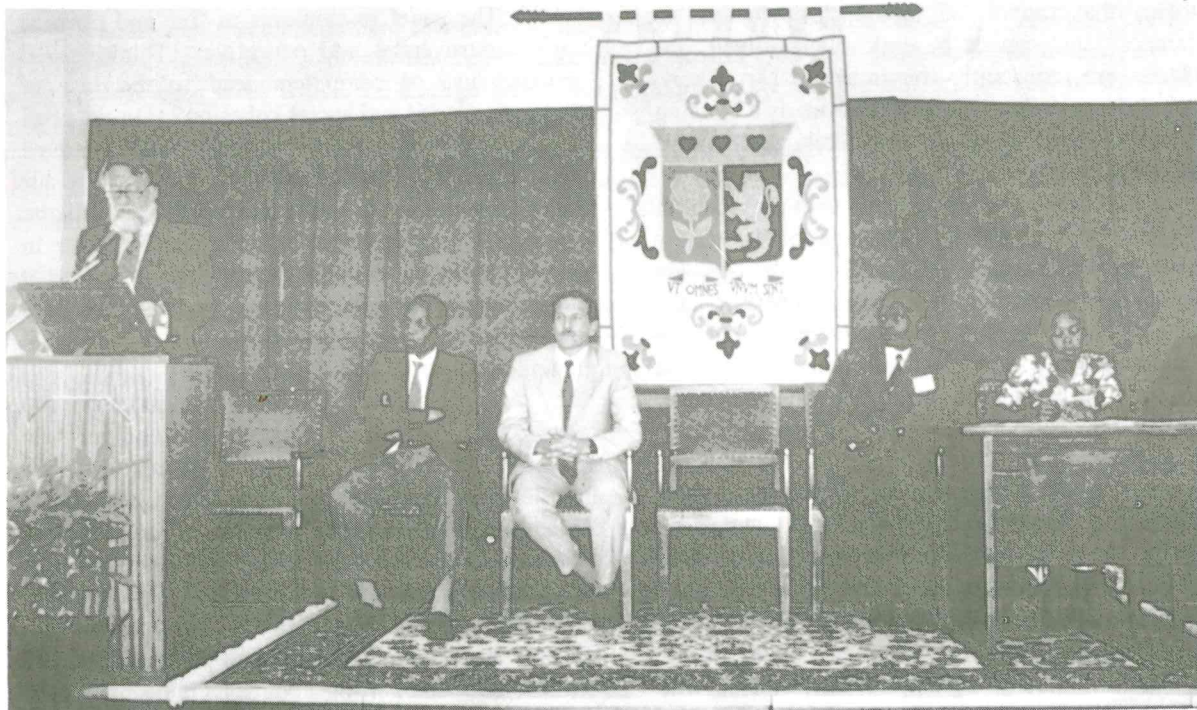
**SECTION FOUR**

1 KENNEDY NJOROGE MUYA  
(PRIZE WINNER)  
3 TOM ONDUKO NYAKOE  
5 ROMSON NJERU NJAGIH

## UNIV 97

### MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: COMPETITION AND CO-OPERATION

Preliminary Congress held at Strathmore College  
on 8 and 9 February 1997



Is the Rwanda problem an ethnic one or a class struggle between the haves and the have nots? Don't you need to be fluent in your mother tongue if you are to be cultured and to have good values? Does Kenya need a federal system or some form of majimboism to reduce the clamour for state power? These were some of the issues that arose at the just concluded preliminary congress of UNIV '97. The congress was convened under the auspices of the Institute of University Co-operation (ICU). ICU aims at furthering the development of cultural and scientific relations at the service of human kind through professional formation and university co-operation. In pursuit of its objectives, ICU organizes annual congresses in Rome, Italy. The Nairobi Preliminary congress was the fruit of the efforts of U-NET, a group of students from various local university and Strathmore College. U-NET shares the aim of ICU.

The Italian Ambassador to Kenya, His Excellency Mr Roberto Di Leo opened this year's congress with the theme **Multicultural Society: Competition and Co-operation**. Achieving co-operation within competition to the Ambassador was probably an attempt at squaring the circle or an

attainable mission impossible. The Ambassador pointed out intensifying global trends at integration and diversification. He then rounded up by highlighting the need for democracy as a prerequisite for any sound economic activity prosperity. The Congress was then declared officially open.

The experts then got into high gear. The first paper was from an Economist and Lecturer. Mr Robert Mudida's informative account explored Obstacles to Co-operation such as the selfishness of nations and individuals. Manifestations of competition are the all too familiar structural adjustment programmes or SAPs. Giving the examples of the Asian Tiger economies that have achieved phenomenal development in so short a time, Kenya, he noted, could achieve similar status in an even shorter time to become an African tiger economy, or better still Africa Lion Economy by applying the same principles or competitiveness and sound management.

Starehe Boys' Centre is known as an institution of academic excellence and produces all-round students. What is the secret behind their success? Mr Okono in a paper on "Cultural

**Integration in Education**", highlighted the general principles that guide life in Starehe such as hard work, ambition, respect, discipline and responsibility. Unique is the school's weekly parliament or Baraza at which pupils and staff freely express their views and ask questions on condition that they are polite and truthful. "There is no problem that cannot be talked through and no differences that cannot be amicably resolved" the students are constantly reminded. Mr Okono concluded by saying "Multiculturalism is a blessing and not a curse. It would be a drab world if we were all the same."

The congress proceedings then moved from the intricacies of global trade and commerce to issues closer home: Rwanda. Mrs Imelda Kayoboke is a mother, wife and businesswoman. She narrated her first-hand experiences of the Rwandese genocide to a hushed audience. Did you know that the Rwandese speak the same language, have the same cultural practices, inter-marry and are in essence one people? That the genocide occurred is inconceivable. Maybe the angels left Rwanda as some author has asserted in a title to a book on Rwanda. From Mrs Kayoboke's moving narrative it is clear that the perpetrator of the genocide need to be brought to justice to pave the way for reconciliation and forgiveness. Rwanda still bleeds. There are very many orphans of the genocide who need material assistance and counselling. The Rwanda children of the genocide have to learn to trust humanity anew. They were traumatised by the violence and the death they witnessed. In conclusion, Mrs Kayoboke wondered aloud "In the case of Rwanda, who are the victims, the killers of the innocent they killed?" Do the killers have a good night's sleep? Your guess is as good as mine. This is a no-win scenario. There are only losers."

A BBC pictorial documentary on the origins of the Rwanda crisis aptly entitled "Rwanda - A Journey Into Darkness", more than seared into the delegates' minds the reality that was the genocide - a tragic event that will haunt Rwanda for many generations. Consider the lessons of the Jewish holocaust and now the Rwanda genocide. History has the tendency to repeat itself. The protagonists may be different, the time may be different, but it just could recur. As Kenyans we have to be eternally vigilant lest we fall victim. Dusk came and Day One of the Congress ended on a sombre tone.

The highly lively and exciting panel session was a fitting way to start Day Two of the Congress after a grim end to Day One. The panellists are professionals and lecturers from various local

universities. Their CV's were impressive with wide experience and solid achievements. What better way to do justice to the Congress theme than by the Delegates seeking answers from experts in such varied fields as **Artificial Intelligence, Chemistry, Education, Philosophy, Economics and Journalism.**

The panel session was as free and open as it was controversial and educative. Think! Will increased use of computers lead to the loss of community spirit and social cohesion? Do we need some form of Majimboism or federalism to reduce ethnic conflicts? Do we need to converse in our mother tongues more and more openly? Will the European Union collapse? Can genocide occur in Kenya? From the panellists' replies to questions it is clear that some competition is good in any field but competitors must play by the rules and a level playing field needs to be established.

The Students' Research Papers were the focus of the Congress. First on the podium was Wallace Kantai with a paper entitled **Can we handle multi-culture? The case of Rwanda.** With the Rwanda crisis emerging as the pet reference of the Congress, what was better than to conclude it than by the summary given by Wallace. Unable to come up with a fitting conclusion to his well-researched and equally well-presented paper, Wallace had this parting comment "I do not know who is to blame for the Rwanda genocide. I also have no idea what is next for Rwanda." A paper on **Transmission of culture through education** was presented by Rose Kitawi and Susan Mwaura presented one on **Work: the influence of Kenya's multi-cultural society.**

The Congress ended on a light note with closing remarks from Soila Pertet. Hers was a highly humorous, yet informative account of competition and co-operation within the campus realm; in this case, the Nairobi University. The Delegates listened attentively as she described life on campus: the pressure to succeed, peer group pressure and the academic and social freedom. In her opinion campus presents opportunities to pursue one's dreams and build friendships across cultures. University is the place to break cultural stereotypes and prejudices.

Looking at the Delegates comments on the Congress there is no doubt that students and young professionals need fora where they can be sensitised on relevant issues and generally think big.

The Congress ended on a positive note and plans for UNIV '98 are already underway.

*by Vincent M Ochieng*

## AND OUR FEELINGS

From the main gate which is almost always closed, one can hardly guess what is behind those iron gates. But one look from the outside and you get the impression that the institution is impressive. It was developed, furnished and equipped by the European Union and grants coming directly from the Italian and Kenyan Governments.

I am talking about the famous Strathmore College. As you walk down the pavement from the gate, there is a watchman's chamber where cars entering the College have to get a disc for security reasons. On the left there is a meadow-like lawn with benches to relax on and trees to offer their shade and cool breeze. There are about four such areas within the College which has a wide concrete parking bay for the cars of staff and students.

At the main entrance of the building there is the logo of the College which comprises of three hearts, a rose and a lion. There is also the College motto below it UT OMNES UNUM SINT. This same logo is on the stained glass window on the way to the library.

The College houses four lecture theatres for the School of Accountancy, a number of computer laboratories for the IDPM students and several classes and typewriter laboratories for the Secretarial School. Immediately on entering through the main door which is marked by four gigantic pillars, straight ahead is a hall with comfy chairs and low tables for visitors. Extending further beyond the hall is the College Chapel which is at a central place in the College to emphasize the importance given by the Administration to the spiritual well-being of its students.

A spacious library for silent study is available as is a cafeteria which offers a variety of delicacies to the students at affordable prices. A Help Desk, a basement parking area and a stone wall along the perimeter of the compound covered with beautiful flowery climbers complete the grand tour round the College.

A team of dedicated staff and students combine beautifully with this expansive institution. During the breaks from class and at lunch time, the College is full of life with students moving in different directions going about their various businesses. One look at the students and you will see that they are relaxed and confident, except for an occasional newcomer who may still be a bit shy. A generally happy atmosphere prevails which makes you feel relaxed immediately. This is due to the importance the administration puts on freedom and on the training of the all-round personality of the students.

Combine all this and you'll see why the College has been at the top of professional training institutions.

It is in this interest that I carried out a research on the feelings of the various parties connected or involved with Strathmore College in one way or another. Many of those interviewed had good things to say about the College.

A girl in Section 1 (SOA) when asked what she felt about being in Strathmore said "You know, Strathmore is the best College in Kenya. I've never been in a Number 1 institution before, so I feel great and privileged to be in Strathmore. But I know it is a challenge."

It's in this same spirit that a Lecturer has written in the preface to one of the textbooks he has published:

"The author is a senior lecturer at Strathmore College, School of Accountancy, the best and most prestigious College of accounting courses...."

Many employers have such confidence and trust in the College that they employ students directly from the College without asking for previous experience which is a basic requirement for employment in most cases.

For many parents a vacancy at Strathmore College is the ultimate tests for their son's or daughter's intelligence. What better way to prove to the world that your child is a somebody!

The outsiders also had something nice to say. A local Kiosk owner when asked his opinion about Strathmore students said "Guys from Strathmore are nice and friendly people. I know them as being committed and faithful, because many a time I've seen them return excess change given to them in error. Generally that's it, apart from the income they generate for the kiosk."

These are some of the feelings people harbour and nurture about being associated with Strathmore. Apart from the spoken feelings, the combination of various aspects in the College have cultivated a culture where everybody feels responsible. So, what generates these feelings about the College? I'd say it's determination, dedication, co-operation and hard work. Keep it up guys.

*by Wilfred Wachira (SOA student)*

## COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

### MANAGEMENT SEMINARS



Over the past three years Strathmore College has been holding Management Seminars for Managers and Executive Secretaries. These Seminars are gathering momentum and proving very popular.

#### Manager's Seminar Dec 1996 Edition

The ITC held the 2nd edition of the bi-annual Manager's Seminar from 2 to 6 December 96. The record attendance of 18 Managers included Lawyers, Accountants, Engineers, Private Business Directors, etc.

The Managers were put through a demanding five day course that included practical hands-on experience of the latest IT applications in word processing, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, networking, etc. In between the practical sessions, the Managers were given lectures on current IT topics like Tendering and Procurement of IT Resources, Systems Analysis and Design as well as the Myths and Realities of the Internet.

At the end of the Seminar, the Managers were treated to a brief but exciting graduation tea party. The Principal gave a brief speech and had just asked the guests to leave at their leisure when one of the Managers requested the opportunity to give a vote of thanks. He expressed his appreciation for the whole programme by saying that he was still not sure which aspect of the course was best; the lunch sessions or the lab sessions. All the Managers agreed that both aspects were treated professionally and with particular attention to the individual and personal background. We are now looking forward to the next seminar that is scheduled for June 1997.

#### Executive Secretaries' Seminars 1996

During 1996 the Secretarial School organized two very successful courses for Executive secretaries. In December the Seminar "New Horizons for Secretaries" attracted 24 participants. Topics covered included Staff Appraisal, Office Etiquette, Public Relations and Stress Management. This was followed by a panel Discussion which was very popular. Participants were also taken for a session on the Internet. The general consensus of the participants was that the Seminar was extremely useful.

Previously in April, a Course on IT for Secretaries was organized. This programme was an introduction to the various packages which are necessary for the efficient use of modern technology. There were 18 participants on this course. All the sessions were well received by everybody and all wanted more time. And being ladies, they not only praised the food served at lunch but asked for the recipes!

*by Celia Donovan, Director Secretarial School  
and John Walubengo, Evening Course Director,  
Information Technology Centre*



## STRATHMORE COLLEGE SPORTS DAY



When a notice was put up asking for reporters for this event, there was a very good response from people who were interested in this, so much so that we are not able to print all the material produced. In fact we are going to give a brief summary of a day that was very full, exciting and enjoyable, and let the photographs tell the rest. We would like to express our thanks to the organizers of the Sports Day and to all the participants - both players and spectators.

The much awaited day started off at 9.00 am at the Railway Sports Club with Women's basketball. After two exciting matches, which gave us a real taste of the Strathmore cheering squad's lung capacity, SES emerged the winners having beaten SOA and ITC 8-7 and 18-6 respectively. The men's basketball started when other games were already in progress so the crowd was not as large, but the games still drew a lot of attention. SOA won the game.

Indoors also provided its amount of entertainment. Badminton was going on alongside table tennis and darts, while chess was being played by some really serious players whose concentration was not broken by the spectators walking in and out and looking over their shoulders.

Badminton ladies singles were won by Martha

Muraya of the SES who played a very good game. The Ladies doubles were also won by the SES. The chess was won by Koli Makau of SOA, closely followed by Kenneth Kamu. The Best Lady player was Betty Itunga of SOA. The Darts doubles were played won by Douglas Songa and Jared Msengo of SOA, and Jared also won the singles.

And we almost forgot to mention the snooker which was being played quietly in an upstairs room. After playing amongst themselves, the students were challenged by the Railway Club members who displayed a lot of professionalism in the game.

Lawn tennis took off quietly and a bit slack but interest grew and there were several good games. The Ladies' singles final was played between two SES girls and Loisemary was the winner.

Rugby and Soccer were the favourite games and by the time the matches started the crowd was well and truly excited and the cheering was an entertainment in itself. SOA proved to be the best team in both games.

The day came to a good end with a short speech from Mr Sotz and the presentation of the trophies.

Once again, thanks to everyone concerned.

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## ENTERTAINMENT

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### THE COMPUTER WORLD

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#### THE YEAR 2000 AND COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

Computer programs developed in the early sixties for various applications eg stock control, banking, sales and purchases, etc had their date formatted using only the last two digits of the year ie 69, 78, 88, etc to imply the years 1969, 1978, and 1988 respectively. The 1960's programmers then knew that when the year 2000 strikes, their systems would interpret it as year 00 since year 99 was the furthest their programs could interpret. This knowledge was however not given the required attention since the early programmers never imagined that their systems would still be operational in the year 2000. In any case, they thought that future colleagues who would update or maintain their system would take the trouble to factor into their systems, a correction that would take care of the year 2000.

Three decades down the line, this mistake has not been corrected since each generation of programmers has tended to pass or procrastinate the job of correcting the mistake to the 'next' or the 'other' programmers. As a result, those programs that are supporting many applications around the world are going to backfire and misbehave when the clock strikes midnight on 31 December 1999. Typical errors would be as follows:

- a Pharmacist you relies on a stock control system to print a report of expired items will be surprised to read that most of his drugs expired 99 years ago and he should therefore urgently remove them from the shelves.
- a Banker who relies on an application that prints a report on debtors who have not yet cleared their loans will be surprised to get a list that shows that most of his clients have failed to clear their loans by over 99 years.

These are some of the scenarios that are lurking behind the year 1999. Most businesses have now started giving this error the necessary attention and are either re-engineering their business systems appropriately or they are simply re-writing their programmes to include the solution for the year 2000.

*by John Walubengo*

#### MERCEDES BENZ F200 IMAGINATION - A DREAM CAR

In 15 years cars without steering wheels or pedals could be a reality. Its key is a magnetic card, the engine is started by pushing a button and it is driven without a steering wheel, pedals or a rear view mirror. The car and its driver moves the lever to the left or right to steer, pulls it backwards to brake, and pushes it forward to accelerate. A video camera and screen provide the driver with comprehensive information on the traffic situation behind the car. This is the description of the car of the future, which was the star of the Paris Motor Show. Doing away with mechanical and hydraulic connections (such as the steering column) presents completely new designs possibilities as well as safety, comfort and cost advantages. For example, the front passenger can take control without having to change seats: the dashboard displays are simply switched from one side of the car to the other.

Elements of this study are to become a reality in 15 years' time.

*Adapted from "Deutschland" No 6, December 1996 by Robert Maranga*

## A LIGHT TOUCH

compiled by Imma Kariuki (Full Time Course Director SOA)

She invited him home for lunch with a view to introducing him to her mother. The latter took one look at him, turned to her daughter and said "I you want to keep it, you must feed it."

How's business?

Farmer	It's growing
Astronomer	It's looking up
Tailor	It's sew sew
Electrician	It's quite light
Watchmaker	It's wound up.

It was raining buckets late one night when he arrived at the door of the only inn for miles around. He knocked loudly and waited for a while. No response came, so he knocked again, louder and yet again. Eventually, a window was thrown open and a woman's angry voice shouted "You may knock until you are blue in the face, we don't open to anyone at this hour. Go away and don't let me see your ugly face again!" She shut the window and vanished before he could think of an appropriate response. A sudden flash of lightening enabled him to see the name of the inn "GEORGE AND THE DRAGON". He knocked again and when she eventually opened the window he said "May I speak to George, please?"

She stopped at the red traffic lights and couldn't restart the car when the lights turned green. She made several attempts to restart, all in vain. When the lights turned green for the third time and she still had not moved, a policeman came up to her and demanded: "Madam, haven't we provided enough colours to please you?"

Father My son, I beat you because I love you.

Son I wish I were old enough to return your love.

Interviewer: Where have you worked?

Interviewee: Well, here and there

Interviewer: What have you done?

Interviewee: Well, this and that.

Interviewer: You may go and come back now and again.

Student 1 My father said that we came from monkeys.

Student 2 Let's not discuss your family problems in class.

Husband and wife had had a row and were driving along the Limuru Road not talking to each other, when they saw a donkey on the road side.

Wife Is that a relative of yours?

Husband Yes, through marriage.

The salesman who was almost banged by a simple motorist shouted impatiently "I takes the factory 2,178 nuts to put this car together, and just one nut to scatter it across the pavement!"

His young wife developed a bad throat and the doctor advised that she should have her tonsils out. "In fact," said the doctor, "you should have had them out when you were a baby". And the young man said "Okay, doc, we'll have the op done. You can send the bill to my father in law".

A retailer after waiting several months for delivery of an order, was so annoyed that he asked the manufacturer to cancel the order immediately. Back came the reply "We regret we cannot cancel immediately. You will have to wait your turn."

A salesman called at a large house where there was an enormous alsatian dog on guard. The woman of the house dashed out anxiously and shouted "Go away, we don't see any hawkers, and please take your leg out of my dog's mouth this instant!"

He had had a hard day and returned home tired, fed up and hungry. "Is my dinner ready, woman?" he scowled.

His caring, co-operative wife shrugged and said "It ought to be; it's been on fire since half past six."

His wife produced bills for water, electricity and the specialist who had examined him. "We're broke, so which bills do we pay"" she asked.

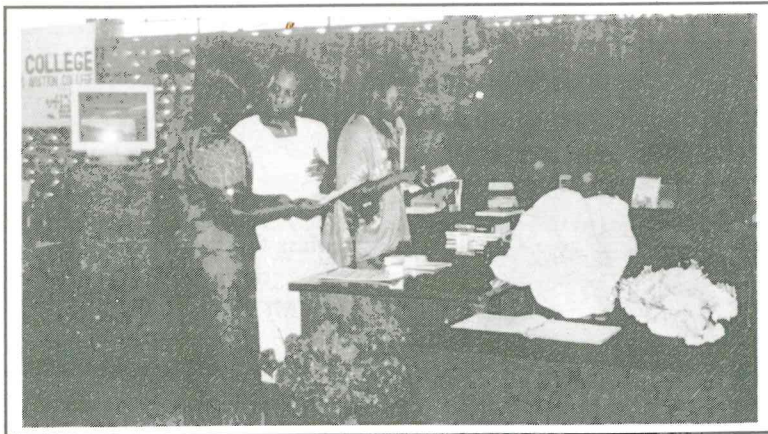
"Better pay the water and the electricity - after all, the doctor wouldn't dare cut off my blood."

## COLLEGE PICTORIAL



1996 Graduation and  
Prize Giving Ceremony

Mr G Njenga, Mr C Sotz,  
and Mr Joao de Dios Pinheiro



Aga Khan Educational Fair

Sports Day



Choir  
(1996 Graduation)



Mass for the Eternal Repose  
of the Soul of  
Mr Ertiman Gendia

UNIV '97



one of the richest nations of the world, fallen back over a sixty year period?" Almost every one of these studies shows that the utilization of education and health (life expectancy is a measure of health) are important determinants.

I am not saying that machinery and physical capital are of negligible importance in a modern economy. Of course, you need good machinery, equipment and plants. But you need skilled workers and managers and innovative entrepreneurs to utilize this machinery effectively. There are many examples of nations that have imported the best possible machinery and have had dismal results. You cannot grow without a strong human capital base. Success depends on how well a nation utilizes its people. If it treats them badly, leads them to under invest in themselves, or neglects a significant fraction of them, it will fail in the modern world, no matter how much machinery it has.

One might think that the value of having an educated and trained population would have failed over time because there are so many more educated people in the world. A simple supply/demand analysis would say that, as there is more supply, prices goes down. Although the supply of educated people has increased, technology also has been shifting rapidly and significantly in favour of the better trained, more educated people. So despite the sizable increase in supply of educated people in the United States, in most European nations, and in some of the developing nations, there has also been tremendous growth in the advantages of getting additional education and training.

From about 1930 to 1970, the typical college graduate in the United States earned about 40 percent more than the typical high school graduate, while the typical high school graduate earned some 40 percent more than the typical high school drop-out. These premiums have virtually doubled to between 70 percent and 80 percent. The reasons are not completely clear. Economic studies are fairly convincing that it is not just because this is an increasingly competitive world, with low-skilled jobs being exported to Asia and other poorer countries. Although that is happening the major determinant seems to be technology. Computers are one example. Computer literacy is just a sample of what is going on in every area: the ability to harness and utilize knowledge effectively determines a nation's success. Knowledge is power in the modern world.

The same general trends that I indicated for the United States are found in Western Europe. Lack of human capital development tends to show up more in Europe in increasing unemployment. In 1980, United States unemployment was much above that in Germany, France, Sweden and many other Western European countries. There has been a complete reversal since then. Unemployment in France now is 11 percent; Spain is 23 percent. Similar numbers apply in most of the Netherlands and Belgium.

Most of these unemployed people are less-educated young people without job experience or on-the-job investment.

Education and training not only promote growth and efficiency, but they can reduce inequality and the impact of disadvantaged backgrounds. Education is the most effective way for able young people of poor backgrounds to rise in the economic hierarchy because human capital is the main asset of 90 percent of the population. This is why income inequality in a nation is greater when inequality in education is greater. Indeed, income inequality is more generally related to inequality in all types of human capital: in training, and health as well as in schooling.

Therefore it is not surprising that the increased inequality in incomes in the United States since the mid-seventies has been caused in good part by larger returns to schooling and other training, and that many countries, like Mexico and Brazil have major pockets of poverty related to regional disparities in opportunities for education.

Where does the human capital come from? What constitutes a successful investment in human capital, either at the individual or national level? One has to start with the family. It is the foundation of a good society and of economic success. Families have differed over time, but they are still very important in the modern economy. To understand human capital, you have to go back to the family because it is families that are concerned about their children and try, with whatever

resources they have, to promote their children's education and value. Families are the major promoters of values in any free society, and even in not-so-free societies.

Families make a variety of decisions. One is whether to have numerous children or to have fewer children and to do more for each child. As countries develop, the trend shifts very strongly toward the latter. Every nation that has developed has done that, some in a remarkably short period of time. Taiwan, for example, has a birth rate lower than the United States. Declining birth rates also characterize Hong Kong, Mexico, and Poland.

Greater education of parents, perhaps of mothers, tends to improve the treatment of children, especially of daughters. The gap between the education of sons and daughters is smaller when parents are more educated.

More educated men and women tend to invest more in their own health and the health of their children. Indeed, education may be the most important single personal determinant of a person's health and life expectancy. I will only mention a few examples of the considerable evidence on the link between education and health.

Educated persons in the US and other rich nations are the least likely to smoke. Smoking in the United States is now found in significant numbers only among those with no college education, and is especially common among high school dropouts.

Education of the poor helps improve their food intake not only by raising their incomes and spending on food, but also by inducing them to make better, ie healthier, choices. All the studies from different nations I have seen indicate that educated persons tend to consume a healthier diet even when the total amount spent on food is held constant.

Of course, the relation between education and better health and life expectancy involves causation in both directions. For greater health and lower mortality also induces larger investments in education and other human capital since rates of return on these investments are greater when the expected amount of working time is greater.

I do not want to create the impression that simply educating the population provides a magic wand to economic prosperity. Communist nations such as Cuba and North Korea did pretty well, at least on paper, in terms of the education levels of their populations. Years of schooling and literacy were high, and yet these countries had very poor economic performances. The Soviet Union was a third-world economy. Even East Germany, which was the pride and joy of communism would be at an income level below that of South Korea if it had not received about \$500 billion of help from West Germany.

Why did they do so badly even with educated populations? Because human capital is not enough. You also need the right economic environment. Systems that failed even though they had educated populations did so because they did not have the complementary aspects of a well-functioning economy: free markets, a flexible price system, individual choice as to what type of education people want and what they are going to do.

You need a system where people who work harder do get paid more. Why get an education or work hard if you are not going to be paid more than anyone else? I visited a few factories in China in 1981, when it was just beginning to open up its economy. When I walked through a room, the people started acting busy; but when I looked away, they stopped working. I asked why and discovered everybody was getting paid more or less the same thing. Equality of income produces a very low level of productivity. Everybody loses as a result.

In studies of countries, hundreds of variables have been tried. People have had all kinds of ideas of what determines economic success. Is it culture or society? Is it population growth or density? The two general variables that turn out to be more important are human capital and the type of economic system. Does a country give the thousands of people it is investing in an incentive to work hard, to innovate, to develop good working habits, to teach their children that it does pay to come to work on time and to work hard?

The role of human capital in the economy means that policies toward education, health and other investments are important partly for their implications about economic prosperity, economic growth, and income inequality. I would like to make a few points on education policy before closing.

Education through secondary school in most nations tends to be dominated by public schools that charge no tuition; eg ninety percent of students in the United States are in public elementary or high schools. Persons generally go to school in the neighbourhoods where they live, or in larger geographic units. Curricula and other programmes are determined politically. There is no need for schools to compete for students by offering better programmes or through tuition charges since the supply of students to a school is largely given.

This system works reasonably well for upper- and middle-class students, for their parents exercise considerable control over the schooling of their children. When these parents are dissatisfied with public schools, they may have means to enrol their children in private schools. Or they can move to communities with public schools more to their liking. Indeed, suburban communities in many developed countries compete for residents partly through the quality of their public schools. So to speak, residents vote with their feet if they do not like the public schools in their neighbourhood.

But this system does not do justice to the schooling demands of poorer families who need good schools to overcome weak family training and learning. Disadvantaged families cannot afford private-school tuition and can seldom move to communities with better public schools. Usually they must accept whatever public schools are available to them, no matter how bad.

To remedy these defects a proposal that is growing in popularity is to give vouchers to students that they can use to help pay their tuition at any school, private or public, that accepts them. Versions of this system have been partially implemented in Sweden, Denmark, Chile, and on a small scale, in the United States.

The World Bank studied private and public schools in Colombia and Tanzania. But the most detailed studies compare public and private high school education in the United States. Private schools here, especially Catholic schools, spend much less per students than big-city public high school, yet they are more successful in raising the performance and cutting the dropout rates of pupils. The reasons are not clear, although these schools are less subject to political interference that limits disciplinary procedures, and they manage to get parents and the neighbourhood community closely involved in their programmes.

Two recent studies at Chicago show that Catholic schools in the United States raise earnings and other performance measures even after detailed efforts to implement selectivity corrections for the unobserved characteristics of students who attend private schools. What is especially important for this talk and the proposal to have vouchers for poor families is the evidence from these studies that students from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to gain the most from attending private schools. This is not surprising in light of the more extensive choices available to middle class and rich students.

I have discussed some evidence that relates investments in education and other human capital to employment and earnings, health and mortality, fertility and family size, and discrimination against girls in education, diet and other ways. All in all I believe the case is overwhelming that investments in human capital are one of the most effective ways to raise the poor to decent levels of income and health.

## THE JOB MARKET IN KENYA

### Interview with Mr Matthew Njogu

#### Personnel Consultant with Hawkins and Associates

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Hawkins and Associates is a Management Consultancy firm located at the prestigious Reinsurance Plaza. They offer professional services to companies seeking to recruit employees. The firm does not make the final selection of candidates but shortlists the applicants and forwards the most promising to its client company which makes the final decision. With this in mind, Evelyn and I were ready to embark on our personal interview with Mr Matthew Njogu, one of the executives of this firm who willingly set aside more than an hour of his precious time to answer our questions.

Many of us students, not only at Strathmore, but on Campuses and in Colleges all over the country, often pause to consider whether our toil is in vain or whether there really are jobs out there. Mr Njogu was quick to reassure us that 'there will always be jobs'. These are mainly replacement jobs and occasionally new companies spring up so new opportunities arise. On asking why so many companies are laying off employees in spite of the claim by economists that inflation in Kenya remained manageable in 1995-96, Mr Njogu said that competitors have increased. For example, in the import-export business, nowadays one person can handle jobs done by two or more people in the past because of technology, experience and a higher level of education.

Like in any other career, Mr Njogu sees the market being flooded with trained Accountants in the near future. Currently CPA Part Two's are being landed with clerical jobs which was unthinkable a few years back. This is because, for one, the institutions offering the CPA course are increasing in number, education is also being taken more seriously now and many use accounting as a competitive edge in a totally different field. It is no longer surprising to see CPA being combined with law, engineering or even architecture by today's youth.

On raising the issue about those Kenyans who train abroad in accounting and computing skills as compared to those locally trained, Mr Njogu commented that what matters most is one's academic background, ie one's basic foundation should be strong, for example, at O Levels, as well as one's personality and how it is expressed. The particular university attended is also important as graduates from some universities do not have good communication skills.

Many young people are opting not to go into the public universities but Mr Njogu emphasized that a degree will always be an added advantage for whatever career one chooses later on as the subject matter covered is very broad, thus increasing one's knowledge in many fields.

It has been a major concern that a few well-known companies are phasing out secretaries and replacing them with office administrators, so is the future of secretaries bleak? Mr Njogu does not think so, as long as the secretaries see themselves as a support to management and not purely producers of documents. With the advances in technology, document production and filing is much easier and many managers do their own. When voice technology will be introduced into the office, the conventional typing skills required for a secretary might become obsolete.

As IT is becoming a key resource in many organizations every other person is rushing to register in the numerous computer training centres shooting up all over Nairobi. But do these people really know how vast the IT field is and that application packages are just a small aspect of IT? This led us to pose the question "What fields of computing will be most marketable as we draw towards the next millennium?" Mr Njogu's view was that there would always be a need for System Analysts who analyze the needs of each department, suggest ways of improving the Information System and so on. So to all those doing IDPM