

Decolonisation Discussion
Asia-Pacific Regional Network
of the Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA)
29 August 2024 (Online)

Decolonisation in Social Work and Development: Lessons from Africa

Rugare Mugumbate

rugare@africasocialwork.net; rugare_mugumbate@uow.edu.au



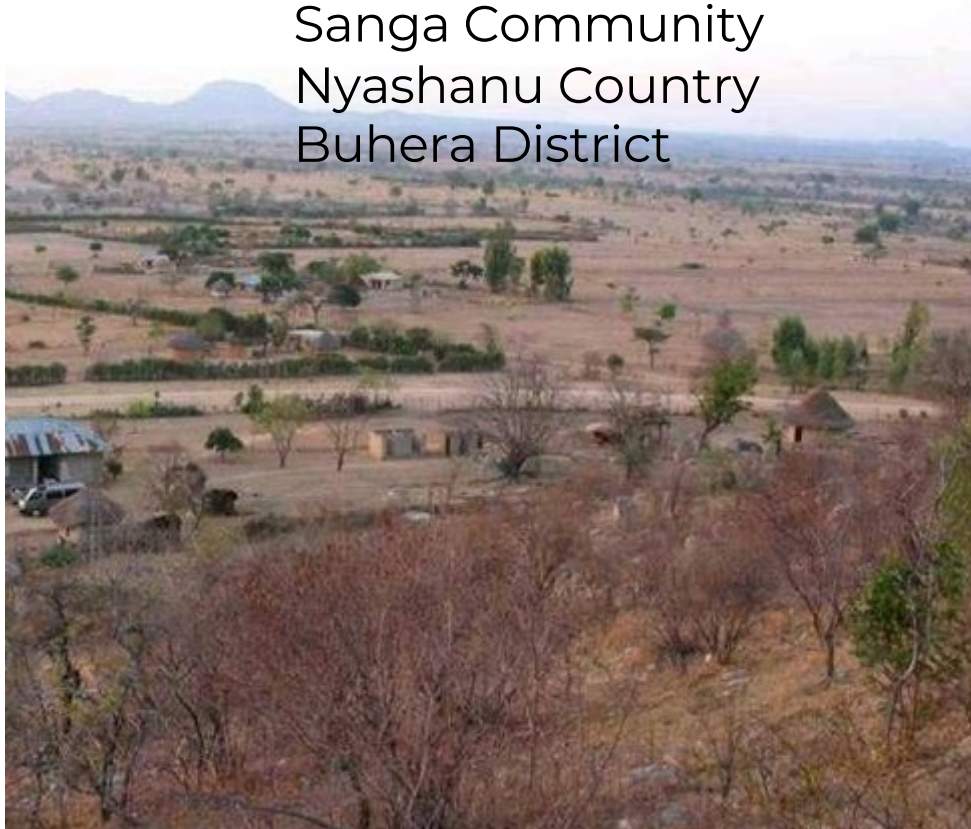
Member of the
Africa
Social Work
&
Development
Network



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

PERMANENT HOME/*MUSHA*

Mugumbate Village
Sanga Community
Nyashanu Country
Buhera District



Zimbabwe



WHERE I WORK



Australia

Dharawal Country





The University of Wollongong Acknowledges the devastating impact of colonisation on its campuses' footprint and commits itself to truth-telling, healing and education.

TOPICS

- 1. History of Social Services and Social Work in Africa**
- 2. The Emergence of the Social Development and Development Approaches**
- 3. Ubuntu Philosophy**
- 4. Ubuntu-inspired Development Models and Frameworks**

ORIGIN OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL WORK IN AFRICA

Indigenous Social Services in Africa

- Indigenous services ensured social security, harmony, individual, family and societal functioning, environmental welfare and spiritual fulfillment.
- These services existed since immemorial, grounded in Ubuntu.
- Services were provided by family members, community members, community & society leaders, spiritual leaders of Africa religion etc.
- There was no urban and rural, it was just a society.
- The village and homestead (*musha*) were key institutions of society.
- There was no Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, DRC, Guinea, Nigeria etc, it was just Africa.

Missionary Social Services in Africa

- Around the year 1500, missionaries of Abrahamic religion (Islamic and Christian) descended on Africans, promoting European and Arabic spirituality, social services and education.
- These services were targeted at those 'converted' to Abraham religion.
- Services were mainly provided at mission stations although outreaches were done.
- Indigenous services continued but were colonised by the missionaries.
- Missionaries paved way for more colonisers to come and for colonization to continue.

Colonial Social Services in Africa

- More non-religious Europeans and Arabs descended on us.
- Slavery was started to force us to go to work outside the continent—Asia, Europe and Americas.
- Africans enslaved as commodities for centuries.
- When slavery was no longer profitable, Europeans and Arabs decided to enslave us on the continent instead of shipping us.
- 1884 – A meeting of European colonists in Berlin, Germany divided us amongst themselves.

Colonial Social Services in Africa

- Europeans started urban communities, where we worked for them in their homes, streets, industries, mines but also farms.
- Their population increased, their children became teenagers but they were very naughty and delinquent.
- They decided to import social welfare and child welfare workers from Europe and America.
- In Zimbabwe the first import came in the 1930s, marking the beginning of state social welfare.
- In other countries, the import happened in the 1920s.

Social Work Profession in Africa

- In the 1920s, Black workers and families increased in urban areas.
- The colonists started training Black people as child workers, community workers or welfare workers.
- The syllabus/curricula, lecturers, philosophy, theories, pedagogies, case studies and language came from Europe or America.
- From certificates, came diplomas, bachelor degrees, masters and PhDs.
- 37 countries (or more) now have a social work qualification in Africa.
- 290 higher education institutions train social workers in Africa.

Social Work Training in Africa (2021)

- Social work training has increased in numbers of institutions and graduates.
- **Relevance** is a major challenge.
- Unemployment is high.
- Migration is another challenge.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF SWEI
Kenya (number 13 in the world)	51
Nigeria	49
Tanzania	21
South Africa	17
Egypt	16
Ghana	15
Ethiopia	14
Cameroon	11
Zambia	9
Libya	8
Somalia	8
Uganda	8
Malawi	7
Zimbabwe	7
Rwanda	6

**THE EMERGENCE OF THE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
AND THE DEVELOPMENT
APPROACH TO SOCIAL
WORK**

The Association of Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA) – 1965 to 1989



Information about ASWEA

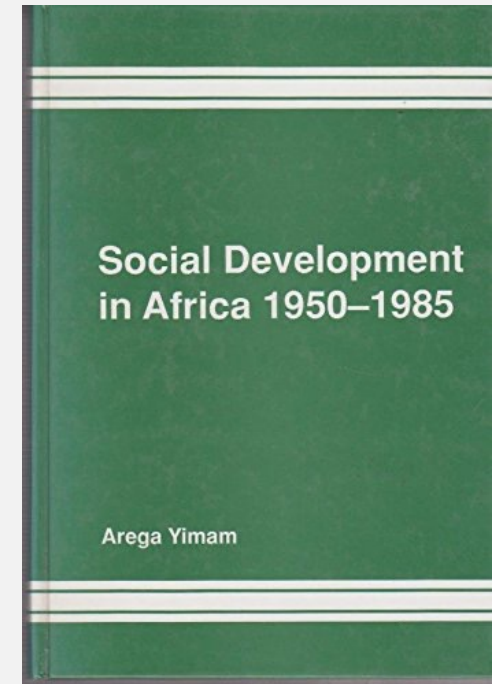
- Formed to change the social work profession in Africa.
- The intention was to change it to social development or to indigenise or decolonise.
- ASWEA was based in Addis Ababa.
- Founded by Selassie Seyoum Gebre (1936-) and Arega Yimam (-c1989).
- ASWEA closed in 1989, probably due to Dr Yimam health and subsequent death.

Selassie Seyoum Gebre (1936-)

- BA, University College Addis Ababa, 1959, MA in Social Service Administration, Tata Institute in India in 1961, MA in Sociology & PhD in Sociology and Social Work, University of Michigan, 1976.
- Worked for Awassa Community Development Training and Demonstration Center, became its Director between 1961 and 1964.
- He taught social work at Haile Selassie University between 1967 and 1968 and was Dean.
- Founder of ASWEA, member of the executive and vice president of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), member of executive of the International Council of Social Welfare between 1968 and 1972.

Yimam Social Development Theory

- Arega Yimam was a passionate advocate of social development with a deep concern for the future of Africa. He argued for a holistic concept of development.
- Promoted self reliance, labour intensivity, redistributive policies, popular participation, cooperatives, a focus on rural development and greater public expenditure on social development.
- He looked at China as a model for Africa.
- He was critical of aid and structural adjustment.
- PhD thesis, University of Bristol (posthumous): *Social Development in Africa 1950-1985*.
- Development should be based on African philosophy to indigenise and decolonise it.



Tesfaye's Developmental Social Work Curricula

Development priorities	Curriculum content
Balance between social and economic development	Less remedial and more developmental and preventative
Citizen participation in national development	Community development
Education	Reduce illiteracy
Health	Interdisciplinary practice, nutritional education
Development and prevention	Integration into overall development plans and social work that anticipates social problems in order to minimize remedial services
Lack of trained social development workers	Multilevel training for development

Tesfaye, A. (1974) or Association of Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA) (1974) Conference Proceeding. Addis Ababa, ASWEA

African Social Development (ASD) Model – Kaseke (2001)

- Importance of social factors in the development process.
- Failures of the modernisation approach.
- Benefits of economic development have not trickled down.
- The majority of people live in absolute poverty.
- A residual (welfaristic) model in social work has failed.
- Social workers have been dealing with symptoms rather than the root causes of the problems.
- Need to operate at the societal and structural level.

Kaseke, E. (2001). Social development as a model of social work practice: the experience of Zimbabwe. School of Social Work Staff Papers. Harare, School of Social Work.

Developmental Approach or Developmentalist Theory

- Creating opportunities for economic productivity (e.g. farming, irrigation, mining, fishing, off-farm income generating projects, self-employment and enterprises)
- Lobbying and advocacy for social justice and infrastructure
- Mobilising local savings
- Improving people's economic productivity skills
- Ensuring that communities contribution is valued, pursued and recognised
- Education in development e.g. Bachelor or Masters in development or Social Work with a development major

Mupedziswa, R (2001) The quest for relevance: towards a conceptual model of developmental social work education and training in Africa. In *International Social Work*. Vol 44;3 Pages 285-300.

Hochfeld, T (2009, 2010a and 2010b)

Lombard, A. and Wairire, G. (2010). Developmental Social Work In South Africa And Kenya: Some Lessons for Africa. *The Social Work Practitioner-Researcher* (now *Southern African Journal of Social Work & Social Development*).

What has changed in Social Work

- Social work in Africa has not changed much.
- However, the social development approach has grown – it incorporates more disciplines not just social work.
- South Africa and Zimbabwe – changed to Department of Social Development (from Department of Social Welfare)
- Developmental and socio-economic development approaches have grown.
- *Journal of Social Development in Africa, 1989*
- *Southern African Journal of Social Work & Social Development (c2015)*
- Africa Social Work and Development Network | Mtandao waKazi zaJamii naMaendeleo waAfrica, formed in 2019

Africa Social Work and Development Network

Mtandao wa Kazi za Jamii na Maendeleo wa Africa

Mtandao
wa Kazi za Jamii
na
Maendeleo wa
Africa



Africa
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www.africasocialwork.net

Globalise
African
Knowledge

Mentoring

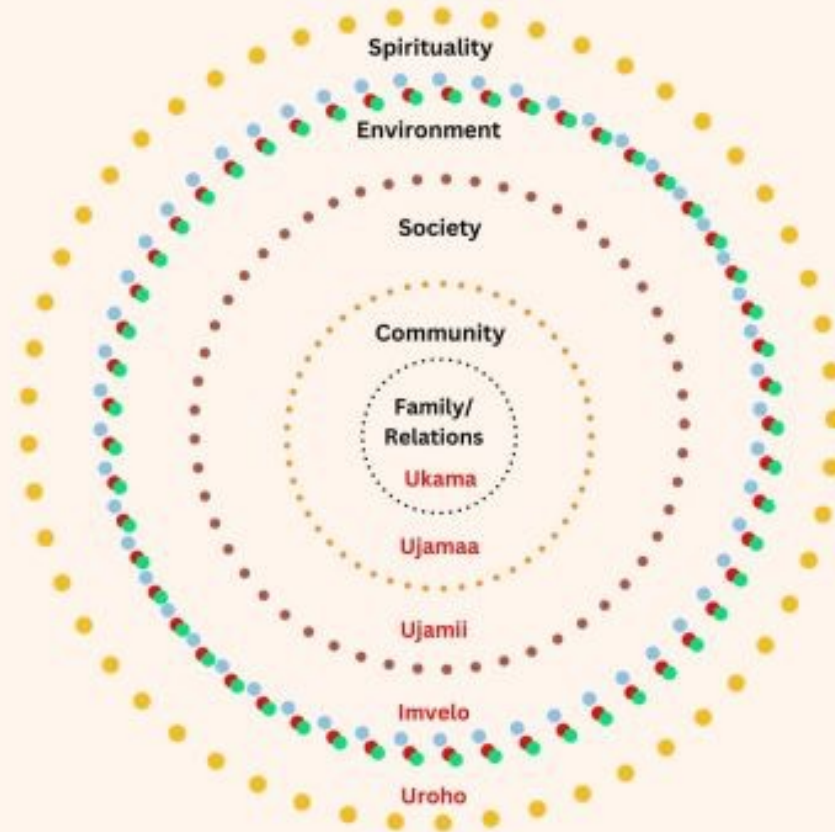
Decolonise
&
Indigenise

Lifelong
Learning

AFRICA' PHILOSOPHY

AFRICA'S OVERARCHING PHILOSOPHY

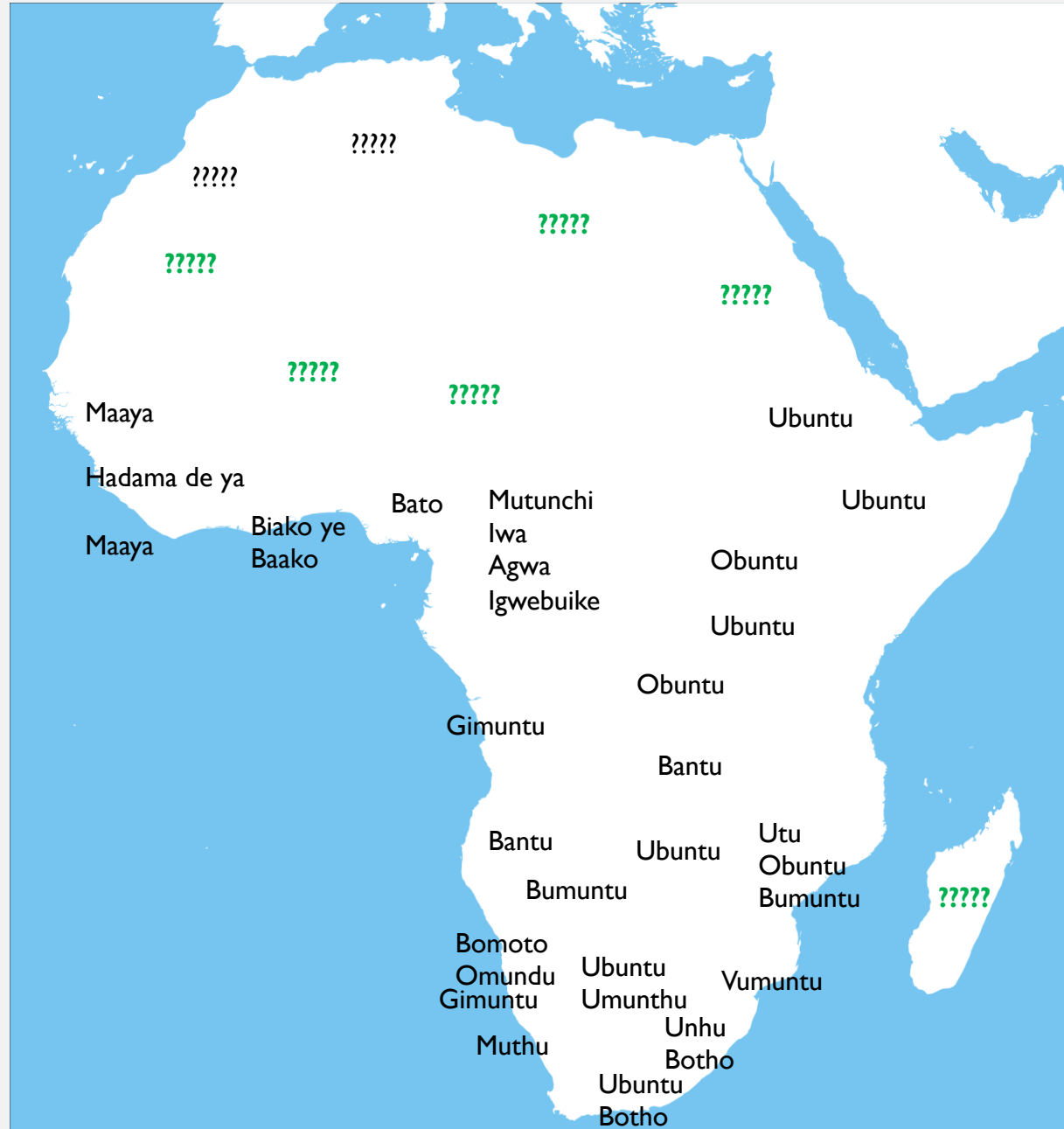
Ubuntu



Philosophy

This is work in progress.

In most African communities or countries, descriptions of being human are similar or very close.



The cultures, practices and values in **?????** areas are very close to ubuntu.

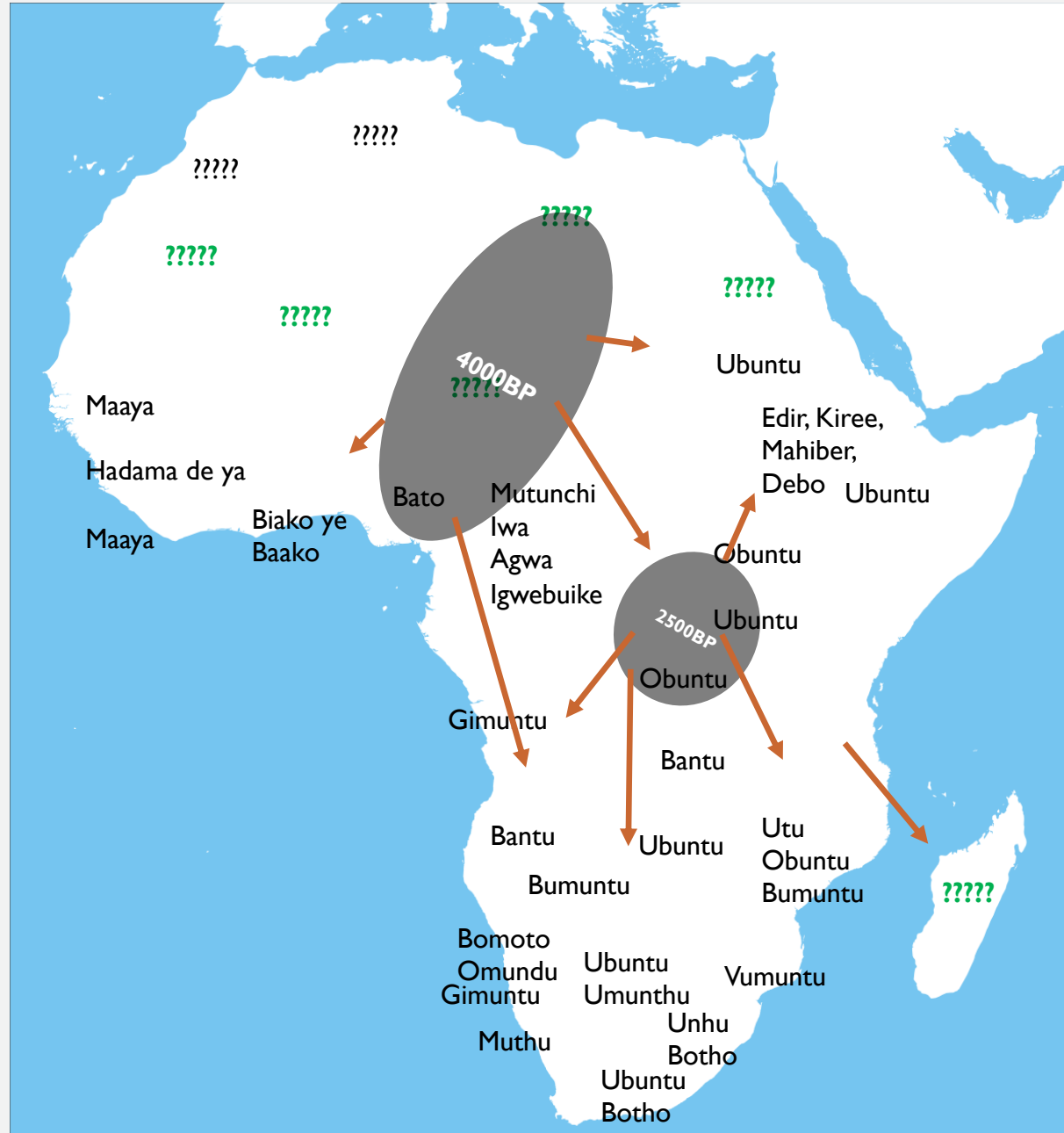
The likelihood that ubuntu is there is very high. The presence of ubuntu among some black communities in **?????** can not be discounted.

Great Africa migration

It is wrong to say this philosophy originated from South Africa. It is shared by Black communities in Africa.

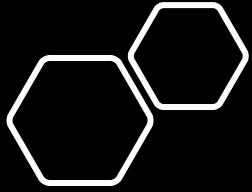
When?

Ubuntu terminology was spread through migration that started about 4000BP (before present time).



Some common Ubuntu aspects

1. Relations
2. Culture
3. Indigeneity
4. 'Wholism'/holism/holistic
5. Justice and Freedom
6. Responsibility
7. Community/Collectivity/Reciprocity
8. Respect



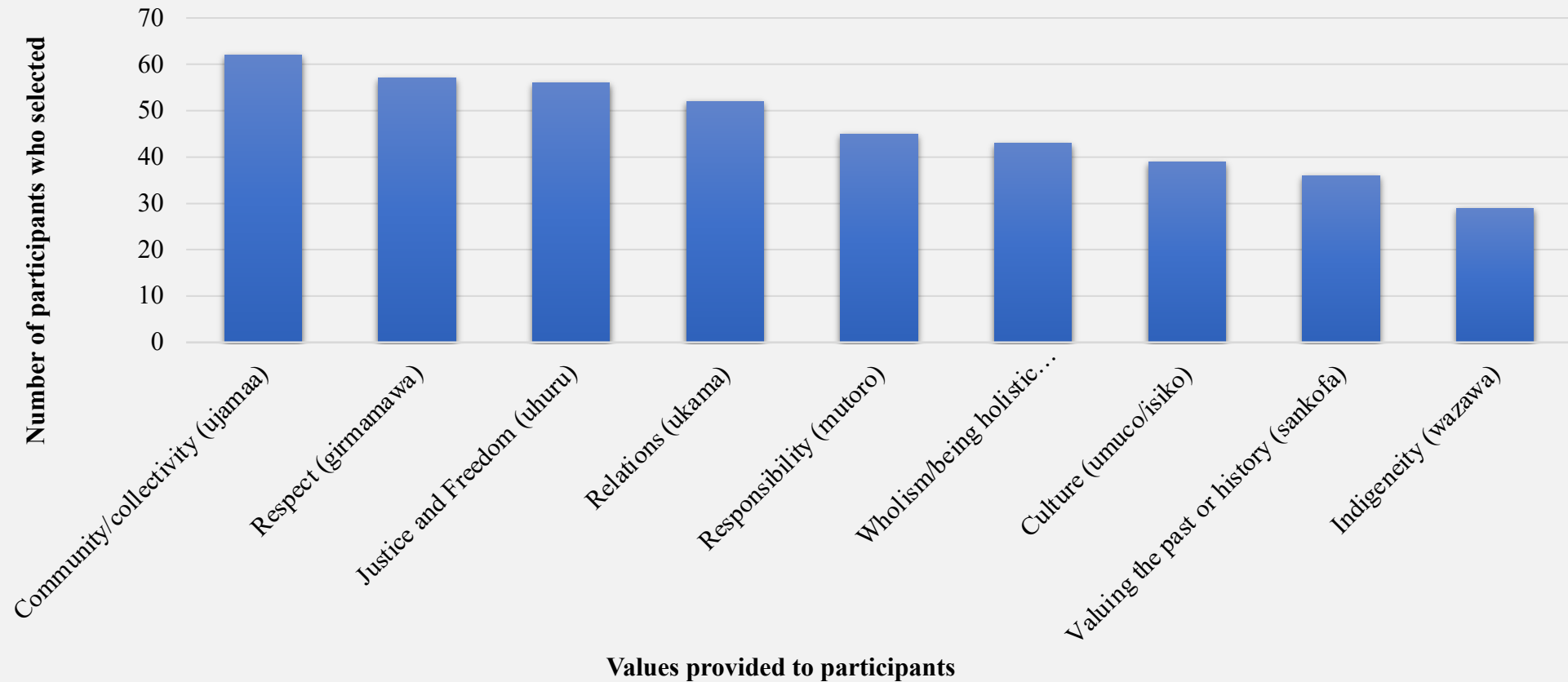
UBUNTU



Ubuntu is a collection of values and practices that black people of Africa or of African origin view as making people authentic human beings.

an authentic individual human being is part of a larger and more significant relational, communal, societal, environmental and spiritual world (AJSW, 2020).

Ubuntu values



Mugumbate, et al (2024), *Journal of Ubuntu*, forthcoming

UBUNTU THE ROOT, BASE OF AFRICAN LIFE AND THOUGHT

Professor Ramose - Ubuntu is at the root of African philosophy and being

Dr. De Tejada - Ubuntu philosophy is practised by Africans in most parts of the continent, "from the Nubian desert to the Cape of Good Hope and from Senegal to Zanzibar."

Professor Nabudere - An African philosophy of life that guides the thinking and actions of Africans must therefore be found in their lived historical experiences and not from philosophical abstractions that have very little meaning in actual life.

Professor Masolo - "African philosophy in its current form is about a resistance to the western philosophical discourse that denies Africa its contribution to world knowledge and civilisation" (Masolo, 1994:1).

Professor Cheick Anta Diop - has traced the generic term for man or ntu, to be the same on other African languages with similar term nit in Wolf, nti in Egyptian, and neddo in Peul.

Professor Nabudere, p 2 "The rejuvenation of the philosophy of Ubuntu is, therefore, important because it provides Africans a sense of self-identity, self-respect and achievement.

Professor Nabudere – Ubuntu enables Africans to deal with their problems in a positive manner by drawing on the humanistic values they have inherited and perpetuated throughout their history."

UBUNTU THE ROOT, BASE OF AFRICAN LIFE AND THOUGHT

Professor Masolo - "African philosophy in its current form is about a resistance to the western philosophical discourse that denies Africa its contribution to world knowledge and civilisation"
(Masolo, 1994:1).

FIRST WAVE PAN-AFRICANISTS

To be human is to be free!

Ubuntu means freedom

Mbande Nzinga (1583 – 1663), sister and advisor of the king of Ngola (now Angola). In 1624 his brother killed himself as a result a demand for slaves by the Portuguese. She became Queen. Had an all-women government.

Mbuya Nehanda (1862-1898) - led Shona people against colonists led by Cecil Rhodes. Hanged by the colonists but said deconolisation will happen “mapfupa angu achamuka” – meaning my people will liberate themselves, decolonisation will happen.

Yaa Asantewa (1840-1921), Queen Mother of Ejisu, Ghana – “if you the men of Ashanti will not go forward, then we will. We the women will. I shall call upon my fellow women. We will fight the white (British) men. We will fight till the last of us falls in the battlefields.”

These three were women. There were many others in West, East, North, Central and Southern Africa

UBUNTU THEOLOGY

John Samuel Mbiti

- John S. Mbiti is regarded as the father of modern African theology.
- Challenged the European view that Africa has no religion of its own, and the colonial and Christian view that African religious views are primitive, demonic and evil, and Africans are savages.
- African religion and religious views are just as legitimate and require respect as Abrahamic and Asian religion.
- **'I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'**, (Mbiti, 1969, p. 106).
- Ubuntu carries African religious beliefs
- We should use ubuntu to decolonize African religious beliefs
- African religious beliefs are mostly not written, they exist in orature

Conflict, mental health, lawlessness, suicide and violence are closely linked to religions that came from outside the continent.



UBUNTU IS CARRIED IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

- Founded decolonizing the mind theory
- African languages are at the centre of his thesis
- Challenged the colonial European view that African languages were inferior and lacked substance.
- Challenged the prioritisation of English, French and Arabic as linguicide, leading to the genocide of African languages.
- Used Gikuyu his mother tongue and insisted that he writes in Gikuyu first then translate to other languages.
- Language carries ubuntu, African philosophy, ideas, values, meanings etc

Decolonising the Mind, 1986



EDUCATION SHOULD TRANSMIT UBUNTU



Stanlake Samkange

“Whose fault is it if no one knows about the philosophy of your grandfather and mine? Is it not your fault and mine? We are the intellectuals of (Africa). It is our business to distill this philosophy, and set it out for the world to see”, (Samkange, 1980).

- We should use ubuntu to decolonize African education and learning
- Ubuntu also crucial as an African political philosophy





UBUNTU MANAGEMENT



Lovemore Mbigi

1. African has its own style or philosophy of management, ubuntu management
2. “Community is the cornerstone in African thought and life (Mbigi, 2005, p. 75).
3. **Masibambane** which means ubuntu inspired business culture marketing, leadership, accountability, training and production.
4. **Nhorowondo** – understanding organisations, needs, motivations, processes and phenomena in their context.
5. **Mumvuri** - shadow corpse theory – often, when organisations are not functioning, there is a ‘shadow’.
6. Collective leadership and decision making is important. Collective fingers theory (**chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda**)





UBUNTU - HUMANISM PHILOSOPHY



Kenneth Buchizya Kaunda – African humanism

- Need for maintaining an African overarching philosophy in all spheres of life – political, economic and social.
- Doing away with colonial mentality, breaking with colonial past
- Appreciation of African values, heritage and worldviews
- Socialism – ensuring that the means of production, distribution, and exchange is community owned and controlled
- Authentic African identity
- African spirituality

”Humanism abhors every form of exploitation of MAN by man.”

“Humanism seeks to create an egalitarian society—that is, society in which there is equal opportunity for self-development for all...”





UBUNTU SPIRITUALITY, Metaphysics and Religion

Professor Dani W. Nabudere



- African philosophy holds that the 'living dead' can, when called upon by the living, intercede and advise them in certain circumstances.
- In addition to the "living-dead," there are also the "un-born" who are recognised to exist in the future.
- Africans believe that the dead continue to exist in a spirit form and as such they are recognised as the "living-dead" or ancestors.
- Christianity and Islam have come to influence Africans spirituality, but this has not done away with African religion.
- In African Ubuntu philosophy, there is an inextricable bond between Umuntu, the Ancestors and the Supreme Being



Community aspects

Ujamaa - pulling together as a community

We are because we are

It takes every member of the community or village to raise a child.

Communityhood



Mwalimu Julius Nyerere

Ubuntu, Madiba Mandela's view

Ubuntu has several aspects

It is about community

And liberation



Robert Mugabe's view

Ubuntu is liberation

Economic liberation

Land liberation



UBUNTU ASPECTS SUMMARY

Individual aspects

Needs, rights, choices, failures, progress, crimes, interventions etc are seen through the family and community. Family rules and identity are valued.

Family aspects

Ubuntu is the foundation of African families. Family needs, choices, desires, resources etc are seen through the larger family, tribe, clan and community. Continuation of the family is highly valued.

Community aspects

Ubuntu is the foundation for African communities. Community members and families are expected to work collectively, to be reciprocal, volunteering, responsible, just etc

Societal aspects

Ubuntu is the foundation of African society. It shapes the economy, politics, justice, education, religion, pan-Africanism, liberty, human rights, power etc

Environmental aspects

Connection to, and protection of the environment is highly valued. People connect with their land by building a permanent home (*musha*) on it, protecting the land and passing it onto to future generations. Birth-in-place and death-in-place (meaning on one's soil or land) are valued. Land is a heritage that provides income and livelihoods. The land is the home of deceased family members, their graves are located there. So will be those of future generations.

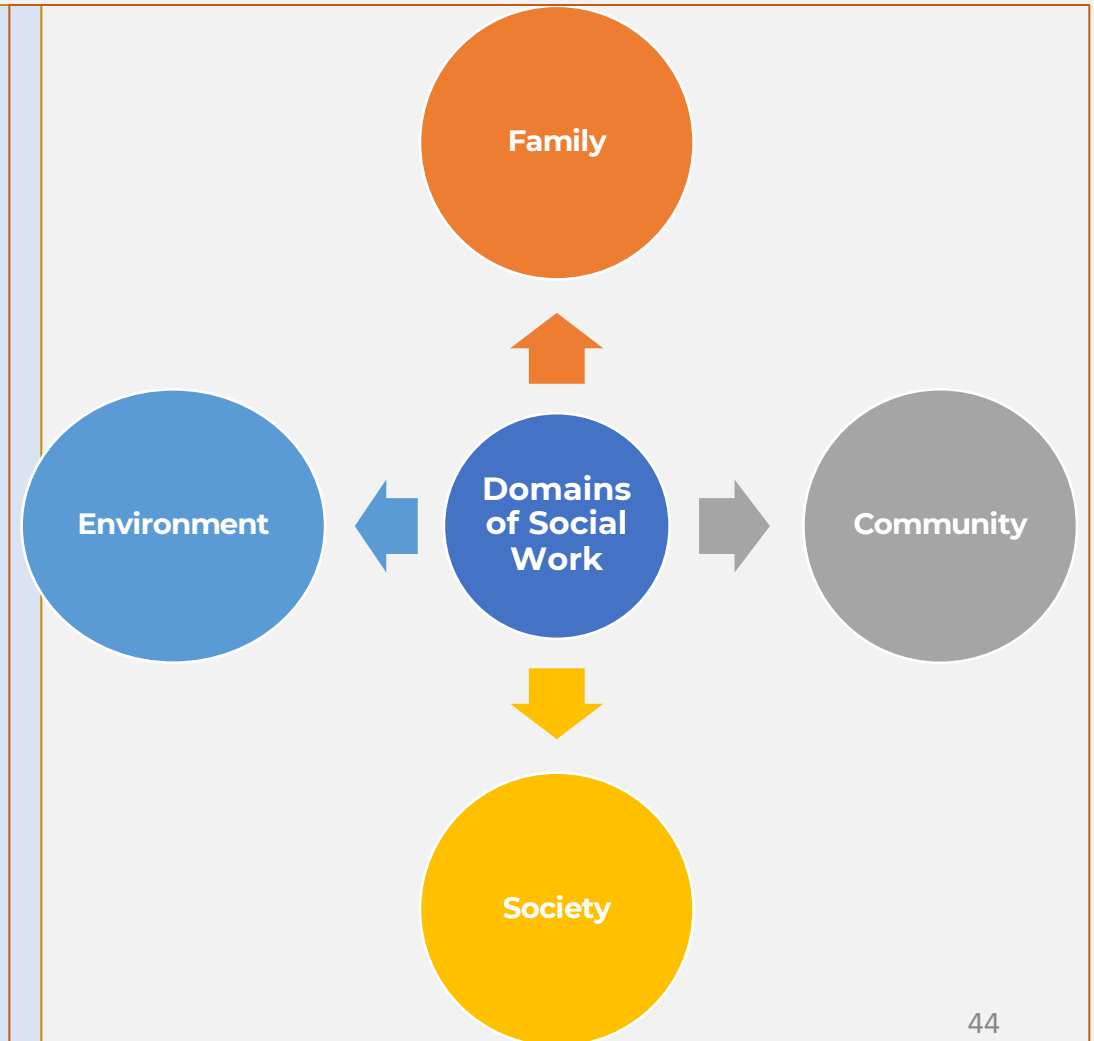
Spiritual aspects

Ubuntu is the spiritual foundation of African societies. Spiritual strength comes from connectedness with God, connectedness with living or deceased parents, relatives and Elders, connectedness with family, connectedness with land and the environment.

THE 4 DOMAINS OF AFRICAN SOCIAL WORK ARE SHAPED BY UBUNTU

1. Understanding, Developing and Protecting **Families** and their members
2. Understanding, Developing and Protecting **Communities**
3. Understanding, Developing and Protecting **Society** and Nations (Socially, Economically, Politically and Spiritually)
4. Understanding, Utilising & Protecting the **Environment** (Domain 4)

Mugumbate et al, 2023



UBUNTU-INSPIRED MODELS AND FRAMEWORKS



African
Union



Umoja
waAfrika

1 vision, 7 aspirations – Agenda2063

Pan African Vision: An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena.

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.
2. **An integrated continent politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance.**
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
4. A peaceful and secure Africa.
5. **Africa with a strong cultural identity common heritage, values and ethics.**
6. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by the African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.
7. An Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.

The Musha Model of Rural Development

– A bottom-up approach
Merging Ubuntu, Agriculture and
Development



Key information and propositions

- More than 70% of people in Africa live on *musha* or *nyumba*, and more than 90% have a *musha* or *nyumba*.
- *Musha* means permanent rural home in a village.
- *Musha* is the first and smallest geographical unit of African society.
- It is a place to live with the environment, be productive, enjoy culture and a rest place for deceased ones.
- *Musha* is economic, social, spiritual, environmental and humanistic.
- This *musha* model of development promotes *nyumba* as a place for farming activities throughout the whole year while incorporating science and technology to make *musha* an economic enterprise that generates income for each family to sustain its livelihood and benefiting the community and the nation.
- Model combines culture, community, technology and enterprise.
- Enhances family livelihoods and helps in creating an active and vibrant village and regional economy.

Key information and propositions

‘As a whole, the Integral Kumusha provides a holistic and integrated approach in rural development and enhancing livelihoods, starting with the traditional homestead within the community, living in harmony with nature while promoting our culture and improving knowledge co-creation through science and technology and using the Integral Kumusha as an enterprise to generate income for the home, the community and the nation at large’

Taranhike, D. S. (2021). Integral Kumusha: A Case of Buhera – Towards Self-Sufficiency in Zimbabwe via Nhakanomics. PhD Thesis. Da Vinci University and TRANS4M Academy for Integral Transformation

Other models or theories

- Women Empowerment Framework or Longwe Framework for Gender Analysis (Sarah Longwe, Zambia)
- Indigenous Research Methodology/Approach (Bagele Chilisa, Botswana)
- Theory of Dead Aid (Dambisa Moyo, Zambia)
- Human Factor (HF) Approach to Development (Claude Mararike, Zimbabwe)
- Made in Africa Evaluation (MAE) approach
- Green Belt Movement (GBM) Model (Wangari Maathai)
- African Union models (development, rural development, environment, gender etc)
- Africa renaissance (Thabo Mbeki)
- Afrofuturism

Importance of philosophy

Sankofa



*Se wo were fi na wosan
kofa a yenkyiri*

Go back and get it



WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

Brain and energy
drain

Incomplete
decolonisation

Abrahamic religion

Western laws and
human rights

No action, more
rhetoric - African
librarians, writers,
researchers

Donors, NGOs

African politics

Migration

Western
knowledge
pushed by western
publishers, writers

Discussion

1. What lessons can you take from Africa?
2. How is rural development being addressed in your region?
3. What other models exist for decolonised development?
4. What is your philosophy?
5. How has philosophy shaped development in Asia and the Pacific?



Useful information

<https://africasocialwork.net/ubuntu>

<https://africasocialwork.net/african-theories-of-social-work/>

<https://africasocialwork.net/research/>

<https://africasocialwork.net/ubuntu-database/>