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Odoch's many publications include papers and chapters in books, conference presentations and journal articles focusing on the deep analysis of culture in relation to design, emerging trends in cultural expression, health and development.   He has concentrated on issues in design education but the closest to his heart has been alternative communication techniques for controlling HIV-AIDS, especially for orphans and vulnerable children in rural Kenya. Together with other scholars he is examining groundswell as a cultural revolution in weddings and connecting African thought system with mainstream philosophy, design and related disciplines.

Odoch's photography of abstract forms in nature is his way of expressing his sensitive vision by focusing on small scale natural beauty that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Historical Dis-Connects in Kenyan Design Education

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Abstract

Drawing on participant observation, reading, professional and teaching experience over fifty years, I conclude that the stakeholders in design education have not yet engaged adequately with one another. I support this with citations, where they exist, and with well-remembered anecdotes that exemplify repeated experience. I submit that all stakeholders have fallen short of establishing appropriate links among academia, government, industry, the international community, designers, students and communities in Kenya. As a simple understanding among educators and practitioners, 'design' means creative problem solving. There are many subfields in design that are often, associated with other academic and professional disciplines to the neglect of the importance of design in those disciplines. As an example, 'Social Change Design' is often termed 'National Development Policy'. This situation has grown out of both Kenyan and global history.

Key words: Kenya, Design, Design Education, DisConnects, Design History

Introduction

This article is based on years of participant and non-participant observation of design processes and response to outcomes of design. As a discipline, design is changing always and everywhere,

yet it seems design education does not always keep up the pace or engage adequately with the community in Kenya. Consumer response to design is often subjective and uncritical. Some designers and enthusiastic non-designers love to link design to 'high technology' and the future yet doing so further complicates rational development. As a result, interaction among design stakeholders in Kenya seems to have changed very little in the last 50 years.

As a widespread understanding among design educators and practitioners, 'design' means basic creative problem solving with add-on considerations for the users and society as a whole. Carrying this basic definition into the field of community development, design is aimed at expanding the range of choice and enhancing life in, with, by and for communities and the individuals who comprise them.It also means liberating the body, mind and soul from the vagaries of oppressions that earlier professionals used to call needs, not desires, not requirements or rights. In the 20th century little did designers know that a time was coming when desires would be inescapable needs. That time has now come i, in the 21st Century. A glaring case in point is rural electrification. Once it was only a fantasy before becoming an aspiration, then a luxury and now an internationally recognized requirement.

Among the many subfields in design, are fashion, product, packaging, visual communication, furniture, surface, fashion, service, and interior design. The design of experiences, systems, settlement patterns, living and work environment, logistics, production, marketing, and distribution are, associated with other academic and professional disciplines to the neglect of the

importance of design in those disciplines. Some examples are 'event design' called 'event planning' that is dominated by East African garden weddings because what remains of African indigenous culture plays only a small role (Pido, O 2020). Finally there is 'social design' that can be a force for good or bad in all aspects of life.

Assuming that there is good, efficacious, well functioning, user-friendly design as opposed to bad, ineffective, dysfunctional, user-hostile, hazardous and destructive design, we can assume that good design should be the objective of all stakeholders. The stakeholders in design for development are individuals, communities, government, non-governmental organizations, international governmental organizations, professional designers and design educators. All are directed towards maximizing widespread individual, social and economic development through well thought out, well-functioning projects, systems and products. In order to understand the roles and activities of all these stakeholders in East Africa, we can take a brief look at the history of design and design education in this region.

Statement of Intent

This paper focuses on stakeholders' failure to network and enable Kenya and Kenyans to benefit from Design. Policies are drawn and activities are scheduled without adequate consultation with design educators and professionals. Consequently, design educators and professionals feel reduced to passive observation. Education authorities are often hell-bent on qualifications and will bar any professionals, who lack the required credentials, from teaching students. Meanwhile, profit is everything to many business

leaders because it makes or breaks businesses; in this case design is good only when it is profitable. Concerns that business considers peripheral are also viewed as unwanted distractions from the essence of the office. Failure to network and the consequences of that failure are fodder for discussions in this paper.

The History of Design in Kenya

The first designers on Earth were East Africans over a million years ago. As those early humans developed their manual and ideational skills, their thoughts could become more complex and they could improve, innovate and fend off boredom by creating functionality, beauty and novelty (Pido, D 2018a). Fast-forwarding to the early 20th century, many changes took place in the design of life, society, material culture and activity. The long term and recent history of design in Kenya is firmly linked to long term environmental factors and foreign incursions (Jacobs 1965, Pido D 1987).

Lack of large-scale deposits of metal ores and fossil fuels has prevented a design developmental parallel between East Africa and other regions (Garlake, 2002; Brown ND). Irregular periodicity of rainfall and laterite soils combine to limit food production and to prevent the accumulation of surplus of any kind (Pido 1987). Where there is little or no surplus, many political structures become impossible and occupational specialization is limited as people have to be deployed in food production rather than in 'creative' pursuits. No surplus also means no patronage; there was nobody wealthy enough to support artists or designers for specific large-scale projects before the colonial incursion (Pido 2011, 2012). The

absence of soft, long filament fibers, both animal and vegetable, means there can be no long-term tradition in spinning, weaving and textile manipulation. Until the 20th century when commercial cotton growing was introduced, cloth had to be imported. This phenomenon is described as early as the 1st century CE (Casson 1994). Ironically, we now have mitumba (second hand clothing), which is the recent end of that phenomenon.

Lack of a huge, renewable fuel supply means no glass manufacturing, limited and localized ceramic production and little leeway to innovate in making glazed pottery or any kind of impermeable container other than with stone. In short, the nations of East Africa, especially Kenya, suffer from an environmentally predetermined paucity of excellent materials that could have enabled the widespread development of the material arts. They have also suffered from geographical barriers like the nyika (a wide belt of scrubby bush with very little water) and social barriers in the form of the slave trade that have limited interior peoples' contact with other regions of the world for several millennia.. The design of social and economic systems has been primarily for survival in marginal to harsh surroundings and for defense against human and non-human predators. (Jacobs 1965)

Over several thousand years, Egyptians, Chinese, Indonesians, Arabs, Persians, Africans and Europeans have all entered East Africa for various reasons. Some of them died off while some adapted to their new environment and became Kenya's 'indigenous communities.' Some were absorbed into those communities already on the ground, others came and went regularly (Arab slave traders)

while others were forced out (the Portuguese). In the 19th Century, when European nations were fighting for geopolitical hegemony, waves of various Europeans tribes arrived, and took control of this region using superior military weaponry and cultural bullying. (Davidson 1974) Regardless of their backgrounds, or intentions, they all held in common the belief that East Africans stood at the bottom of a cultural ladder and that they themselves were at the top. This conviction, along with the assumption that East African cultures were static and unchanging, spawned unparalleled arrogance and intense efforts to bring East African peoples to 'civilization' and the 'true religion.'

The colonial, and later the international, incursion into Kenya was spearheaded by peoples who came from resource-rich regions of the world. Parts of their struggles against each other were based on the manipulation of surplus. (Marx 1867) They brought with them the mistaken notion that the sustained production of surplus is possible everywhere and that people who do not produce surplus are lazy or somehow defective. For unknown reasons they also equated ignorance with defect; consequently; to be ignorant was to be defective. A casual view of the design process reveals that it is a search for a solution to the problem at hand; essentially there is ignorance up until the eureka moment (solution to the problem). Ignorance as an inherent characteristic was a bedrock belief about Africans in the colonial Africa.

Starting in the late 1800s, Massive redesign took place without anyone ever identifying the process as design and without extensive consideration of the consequences both positive and negative of

each step that was taken. In the British-controlled territories, Christian missionaries played out the 'ignorance' belief and colonial governments committed themselves to replacing whatever Africans knew with European 'truth' As design educators we are still unsure at to whether design is or is not about the truth. European negative attitude towards ignorance underscored their determination to establish a new order in Africa without attention to the simple fact that they, too, were ignorant.. While a new order was being imposed, everything that had been in place was disrupted. Communities were seldom, if ever, consulted in the redesign of their environments or their lives. Suggestions of different ways of doing things or of local participation were out of the question because 'natives' had no meaningful business but to follow approved plans set by the colonizers . It was in this setting that education through schooling was introduced and imposed on hapless individuals who later grew into political elites. Children were separated from their families to the detriment of their holistic education, and elitism of the literate was cultivated. An outstanding feature of the brainwashed elites was disdain for anything local. School education was greatly responsible for 'Black British', a socially important label for Africans who tried to think ad do all that is British.

British superiority was also contrived and mythologized. The British did not stop at commitment to replacing anything local but actually planted British lackeys in public administration in positions of power. Any man likely to promote and entrench British interest became a powerful public administrator even with rudimentary knowledge of Christianity, English language and Arithmetic. The British also forced the cash economy on locals through legislation

and taxation. The cash economy forced or encouraged local youth to leave their rural homes and look for employment in towns and large-scale farms. Rural homes were thus left without a youthful labor force and families were disrupted while the young failed to learn all they needed to know at home.

With Africans just beginning to get a handle on the cash economy, the colonial government deliberately set a standard of low cash remuneration for those who were employed as wage earners. They could get away with this as long as the vast majority of Africans could grow most of their food in their rural homes while sending cash remittances to their rural relatives. That pattern changed observably around 1990 when food production started dropping and the standard of living rose in urban areas. It became clear that the employed could no longer send enough cash to their rural families and the rural dwellers could no longer send enough food to their relatives working far away.

Low pay means low purchasing power to acquire manufactured goods. Very few people could afford to pay for products whose manufacturers had employed designers to make them user friendly. Costs had to be kept low or markets would be lost. Industry was hobbled by this economic limitation and by the need to import machinery, materials and manufactured goods from other countries thus incurring duties and taxes that priced good products out of the market. A foreign businessman in nariobi once remarked that 'in Kenya, you don't sell quality, you sell price,; (Nathan Shapira PC) Haphazardly designed, dysfunctional products abounded. Product

dumping by foreign manufacturers became the order of the day, and Kenyans learned to either accept inferior products or to do without.

This combination of factors led to development of the Jua Kali, sector where cheap goods are produced informally 'in the hot sun.'. Efforts at 'import substitution' and in-country manufacturing industries were often disastrous. Equally, very few Kenyans had the discretionary cash/disposable income that could be used to buy creative works of art, craft or design. The Asian community, brought to Kenya as virtual though not nominal slaves, came to dominate small-scale trade and manufacturing. The colonial government prevented them from integrating with Africans and Euro-Kenyans through legislation that would reinforce the envisioned apartheid-like scheme. People who have small shops and are forced to make their living entirely through cash without access to agricultural land (as the Jews in Europe) are normally hated by their customer base and disdained by the power elite. When Asian families tried to set up large-scale production industries, they could not make them cost effective because of the limited and irregular supplies of the raw materials that were needed to sustain production. They could do very little in the way of innovation because of extreme conservatism in the underpaid market and hostility directed at them from above and below. They had to 'play it safe', just to stay in place and clamped in the jaws of a social, political and economic vise. Those who became wealthy undertook major and also small-scale charitable works in their effort to gain acceptance.

For over a century none of the stakeholders in design and design education have identified themselves as such, at least not

effectively. Colonial governments seldom promote indigenous design and 'frill' subjects such as Fine Art, Craft, Music and Drama in schools. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the design profession was in its nascent stages in other parts of the world, and designers were just beginning to make their presence felt as a dignified profession. Design education in the colonial metropoles (London, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin and Lisbon) was confined to a few schools and movements, notably the Arts and Crafts Movement and the Bauhaus, to mention only two. In the three-tiered Kenyan colonial system, Africans were to be managed by Asians and Whites. They were considered 'trainable' in manual and clerical skills for relatively low-level employment. Art and Craft were available in the schools but there were few teachers with the competency to teach anything but the basics.

Foreign religious groups attacked and demonized local beliefs. Skin and bark cloth garments had to be replaced by imported woven cloth (from Britain, America and the Empire) to avoid burning in Hell for eternity. Glass beads, a product of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Italy were associated with heathenism and the devil. Missionaries in Kisii demonized 'Ekeigoroigoro' a very effective educational sculpture installation, because they saw it as "graven images" and yet they placed small dolls depicting the nativity in their churches at Christmas time and put up statues of Jesus, Mary and the Saints. They demonized the worship of 'animal gods' but represented their Holy Spirit as a bird.

If the colonial government, NGOs and the international community failed to recognize the importance of the indigenous arts

and design, they were not alone. Discouragement of innovation and creativity are often built into cultural systems that are age and gender segregated. Suppression of youthful creativity by older generations is a human universal as established social order wants to replicate itself. The East African gerontocratic age grade systems have placed too little value on encouragement of the young to come up with new ideas. Globally, youths often act out innovations as statements of defiance of earlier generations. In East Africa, however, each generation has also tended to lock in certain knowledge for itself.

To date, African parents generally have not encouraged creativity or innovation. Anybody who behaves out of line with what society prescribes is said to 'have something in his body,' meaning something like madness. In many cultures, children are expected to listen to what adults have to say, not to speak until spoken to, and not to ask questions.   East African parents share with parents in other places a fear that the kids will ask questions they cannot answer. General fear of spiritual manipulation by anyone who does things differently is also a factor as is the fear that doing anything different will attract negative spiritual attention. In many East African communities creative and craft skills are passed individually from older to younger people in a gendered setting.   In some cultures, craft specializations are the preserve of specific individuals, families or clans.

While colonial governments were trying to rework the cosmopole in the image of the metropole, NGOs, both faith-based and humanitarian, were also driven by the replacement agenda.

Individually and collectively, East Africans were stunned by the massive affront to all they knew. This led to secrecy and the long-standing practice of letting the foreigners go ahead with plans that could never work and watching in amusement while benefitting from the money and hardware that flowed into their hands. A culture of deliberate failure grew up as a parallel. Design was not to be negotiated as long as the foreigners were bringing money. Naturally, there was always hope that whatever the foreigners were doing would actually work and local people would benefit in one way or another.

Discussion of community stakeholder involvement in design and design education must include deliberate placement of bad, inconveniencing and hazardous design. While there is little discussion of this phenomenon in the literature on development, the author has observed it time and again in the field all over Kenya. (Pido 2018 d) Seniors claim to be training the young to 'keep on their toes' while men proclaim that 'our women know exactly how' to deal with a design challenge that should never have been there. Refusal to divert cattle from the steep, rocky path of people carrying water on their backs, failure to allocate funds to repair a pump, placement of a water tank far from the kitchen, are examples of placement of user hostile features in design for development. Some members of various communities do not identify themselves as stakeholders in making things better for the whole communities.

As tertiary education in design took hold in the late 1970s, Kenyans saw a market niche for their own design offices. These began to parallel and compete with the international advertising and

design firms. The big international agencies began to absorb Kenyan trained designers many of whom later set out on their own. The vast majority of trained designers however, was absorbed into the civil service and locally based small firms catering to a local and regional clientele. Yet, even at this writing, there is no named government office for design and no budget lines for designers anywhere within the civil service.   To understand the confluence of the dysfunctional consideration of design in communities and a1dministration we must examine how it came to be taught in schools.

History of Design Education in Kenya

The focus here is on the development of education in the academic discipline of design. Throughout the 20th Century, there was a general failure of those in power to recognize Design and the Arts as infrastructural and fundamental to 'development' in Eastern Africa.   Since British education emphasized sciences leading to professions in medicine, engineering and agriculture, education in East Africa was expected to follow suit.   The argument was that doing as Europeans did would make our education international and recognized throughout the world, Essentially this failure was fairly universal as these subjects were equally ignored in the schooling systems of the so called 'developed' countries.

In keeping with the post-Industrial Revolution pattern of production for mass consumption, education for the masses in the colonies was located in the schooling system. 'Mass' rather than 'individualized' was the determining aesthetic; anything standardized and mass-produced was beautiful.   There was a

cataclysmic switch from many teachers for each child to one teacher for many children. The mass economy meant that the school had to cater for large numbers receiving standardized curricula and being weeded out with standardized examinations. 'Up to standard' was the buzzword of that time. Indeed, pupils were dismissed from school when their conduct was deemed to be 'below standard'. There was much talk about 'standards,' even the notion of dressing up to 'standard' came to school education.

Around the 1950s schools became more widely visible, especially faith-based schools of the Catholics, Protestants and Muslims. From primary school recollections in the 1950s, Arithmetic and English were the most important subjects, Religion and Geography were second, Nature Study and Hand Work were third and least important. Design education began as a part of Hand Work, Art and Craft, and, eventually, Art and Design in the 1980s. Drawing and painting dominated the scene augmented by craft skills. The schooling system neither identified nor fostered talents or skills outside numeracy and literacy.

Primary-Leaving examinations were infamous but they determined those who entered secondary schools, technical schools or became 'out-of-school youth'. The hierarchy of subjects continued into secondary schools with Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology at the top followed by English, Geography, History, Religion and Literature and the Arts and Crafts bringing up the rear. Fine Art, Music, Drama were pastime activities intended to beef-up grades and relieve pressure from the academically more taxing subjects; they were not serious engagements. Design was

never named but was included in Fine Art. Those whose grades were reasonable but barred them from joining secondary school were admitted to technical schools where education was more technical, hands-on and aimed to produce blue-collar workers instead of creative, innovative workers. No one was formally rewarded for high levels of pictoracy, manual dexterity or spatial understanding, or musical or kinetic ability, and certainly not for coming up with new ideas or designing anything.

At some point in the history of Britain, reaching the 'peak' was the objective in every walk of life. Getting to the peak has been the principal objective in sports, education and professions everywhere. As a product of the exclusionary system that sloughs off multitudes of people at every step, those who passed the O level exams went on to higher school. Once again, the rest were tracked into technical schools or out of the system. The Arts were offered only in very few A Level schools. For those who made the cut, Fine Art continued at the tertiary at the Margaret Trowell School of Fine Art at Makerere University in Kampala. That School had separate departments for Sculpture, Painting, Ceramics and Textiles whereas the Fine Arts in Kenya are taught in a single department. The Trowell model is used at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania and at Kyambogo University, in Uganda. (Trowell 1970) The view of Design as Fine Art and Craft is prevalent at both Kyambogo and Dar-es-Salaam though their focus is on teacher training rather than preparation for practice.

Specific design education began in earnest at the University of Nairobi, the then Royal Technical College of London University and

Nairobi University College of the University of East Africa. The first cohort of students arrived in 1968. Selby Mvusi, a South African artist was the driving force behind industrial design education at the College. When he died in a road accident in late 1967, industrial design education was left to others including architects, who imprinted their different marks on the original plan. Among them was Prof. Gregory Maloba, The first Dean of the Faculty of Architecture Design and Development. He was a product of the Margaret Trowell School who sought to emulate the design education model at the Royal College of Art (RCA). In short, Prof. Maloba believed that Design is part of Art with only minor differences. Alongside Prof Maloba and Prof Mvusi, came Terrence Hirst armed with degrees from prestigious art schools in the UK. He, too, thought differences between Art and Design was not of a kind; Terrence is best remembered for his pioneering work as the Father of Kenyan cartooning.

In 1970, Prof Nathan Shapira, from the University of California became the first official chair of the Department of Design. In his view Design is everything and everywhere, even including actions so simple as neatly arranging the contents of a desk drawer. His other view was that design is an ever-ending process, is multidisciplinary and is both engineering and art. Danish designer Kristian Vedel, was seconded from the Danish International Agency for Development (DANIDA). He saw industrial design through experience and as simplified and modular. Those were the views that he and Shapira wanted to imprint on Mvusi's original plan.

By 1972, the Department of Fine Art had hived off and moved to Kenyatta University College. The Department of Design now included the Triestian Shapira, a Dane, a German, an Israeli, a Scot, a Rumanian, a Kenyan Asian and an American. All brought unique influences and perspectives within an industrially oriented framework and design ethos of their own countries. One of the lecturers stopped short of connecting their ideas with Kenyan communities; the idea of engaging Kamba jewelers in teaching undergraduate students traditional crafting skills. The University forbade it because the Kamba jewelers lacked university degrees; the line between formally and informally trained designers was drawn firmly in the sand.

I have noted that the design profession was coming into its own in the early to mid-20th century. This was at a time when designers everywhere were riding a wave of self-serving hierarchical attitude including the idea that design talent and skills are esoteric and confined to a special few. But the design profession and design education have democratized over the decades. Design is now more concerned with environmental issues than ever before, to the benefit of all concerned. We also see Kenyan designers and design students panic when they have to think outside the proverbial 'box.' This comes as no surprise considering the complex backdrop of Kenyan design and education.

As the cradle of design education, the University of Nairobi was committed to establishing a role for design in overall national and regional development. However, it was never clear exactly what was meant by 'development.' Community engagement was never on

anybody's map. Academic authorities were unclear as to what is or isn't design. The view that design is everything made it easy for students to lose direction. 'Development' was flaunted as the reason for design education in East Africa. The question students asked was whether or not development could take place without design yet development was and is happening without professional input. With this narrowed focus on the very broad and ill-defined concept of 'development' there grew a design-blind culture that has persisted over nearly five decades. This culture has failed to address students' aspirations and has failed to engage communities both large and small.

The Stakeholders in Design and Engagement

I turn now to design practitioners as outgrowths of both formal and informal training. Efforts are being made to segregate the degree certified professionals from the rest and to accord them higher status and advantage. Practice is a leveling factor regardless of formal or informal background. This can be seen very clearly in the subfield of graphic design. Only a few years ago, the graphic designer had special knowledge and understanding and could command substantial fees. Then computer programs put the tools of graphic design into everyone's hands, and it all changed. Graphic Design – now known officially as Visual Communication Design or VISCOM, has been thoroughly democratized. Professional Kenyan designers continue to turn out ghastly graphics, but no one pays any attention. At the same time, graphic designers with little or no formal training produce masterpieces of cartoon art and other graphic forms as they dominate the profession. Whereas the fine artists had dominated the studios of advertising agencies, today's

designers are the art directors who develop and address design briefs.

Product design began in small crafts workshops in the late 1960s and took more elaborated form with government vocational rehabilitation workshops the YMCA and the private African Heritage starting in the early 1970s. The first visual communication design office was established around 1974, in Nairobi at Car and General House. An interior design office was established around 1978, in Nairobi. By 1980, there were many design offices in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and other parts of Kenya.

Community engagement was never and is not yet firmly on the map of university-educated designers. Professionals in Kenya today operate the world of big contracts and government or the private sector; along with the world of small scale and individual enterprise. Freelance designers, part timers and others form the mass of practicing designers in East Africa. They are often in the informal or Jua Kali sector and they tend to serve a specialized or localized client base. Many are housebound because of family while some are carrying forward the traditions of their communities learned from their elders. For reasons unknown, stakeholders and other people often ignore this important sector. They [the JuaKali practitioners] often lack literacy and numeracy skills and/or money to enroll in training programs. Some examples of this very widespread group are the Kisii stone carvers, Kamba basket makers and Maasai bead workers. Many cannot read technical drawings or sketches but can work only from 3 dimensional objects. They are rich in capability but are hampered by lack of training that could be delivered by

design extension services if such existed. These people are now able to access instructional and exemplary videos on YouTube, Pinterest and other websites.

I have mentioned the challenges of design faced by industry and business above. The social isolation of the mercantile and industrial sector has cost Kenya dearly as products have continually been turned out that are user hostile or dysfunctional.

To name a few, we can begin with the steel tableware made by a prominent local manufacturer. For at least 5 decades the milk jug has been dribbling milk down its side but not into the teacup. The simple solution would be to slightly curl the spout under, but this would require additional tool and add to labour costs. Packaging of fast-moving consumer goods is for the convenience of the producer, not the consumer. Reclosable packaging has been the norm in other countries since the 1950s, Kenyan packagers make sure that packets for items like bread and cereals cannot be reclosed for temporary storage.   The ends of toilet paper rolls in Kenya are glued down so that the user has to struggle thus wasting at least one round of paper from each roll. The cost of these small design glitches, if multiplied by many millions, is quite enormous.

Another result of isolation is the neglect of products that imitate the shape or function of their traditional counterparts. At the Nairobi Show in 1971, the South Koreans showed a plastic split gourd but that product did not inspire any manufacturer in Kenya. It was not until 2014. That Nakumatt marketed a tabletop water container (with a tap) that replicated both the color and shape of the

Dapi, a traditional Luo water pot.   It was only by coincidence that the Maasai community was able to find the impermeable glass Treetops orange squash bottle that mimicked their milk gourds. And only by opportunism that the Luos were able to switch from carrying their water in heavy clay pots to the much lighter and plastic Elianto cooking oil container.

Designers and design educators are well aware that the government of an independent Kenya has always had to prioritize and utilize limited resources for maximum accomplishment. A fantasy, shared by many designers, is that Government will someday include 'Designer' as an important job title in every ministry and that county and local governments will do the same. A County Designer would be able to work with graphics, systems design, product design, environmental design, and a host of other aspects of desperately needed work at the county level. Kenyan designers like to think that Government would act if design is presented in meaningful ways. Several design graduates have been elected to parliament, but they have done little to promote design and design concepts to the State.

Within the Civil Service, graduates are often employed in 'parent' ministries; thus, engineers work in the Ministry of Works, doctors in the Ministry of Health, teachers in the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, there is no Ministry of Design; design graduates work in many government offices without recognition of their profession by their superiors and HR departments. Voice of Kenya once employed design graduates of the University of Nairobi and similar institutions in television production. The Ministry was

reworked and is now the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, the fate of design graduates in the new ministry is not yet clear. Designers continue to be employed at the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, the parastatal that succeeded the Voice of Kenya. The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is not yet the parent ministry for design professionals. Confusing design with 'fine art' and viewing it as an 'extra' rather than an essential are among the reasons why designers are often employed as illustrators or embellishers rather than for their skills in making things work well and correctly.

There are no design extension officers in any government ministry. We note that ministries such as Agriculture, Commerce and Livestock development have extension officers, but there is no extension program that would take designers to local levels to advise on packaging, recycling, placement of amenities, product design, post-harvest value addition - the list is endless. Such extension officers would-be one-way design can effectively engage with and benefit communities. They could help demonstrate the use of design, stimulate employment of trained designers and entrench interest in the field of design.

While government is usually the scapegoat of last resort in solving problems, a clear eyed and sober assessment of the present situation in Kenya must absolve government of final responsibility for shortcomings. Government has been the least informed about the role of design as the answer to many questions and challenges. The responsibility for informing Government should belong to the design educators throughout the primary secondary and tertiary

institutions. This is just beginning to happen, and not a moment too soon.

There is a vast pool of functioning and potential designers who go unrecognized even by themselves. The distinction between the formally educated and the non-school educated confounds any approaches to community engagement. University design students and their families and communities frequently ask 'what is design?' Families may be trying to understand the value the design profession for their child after graduation. The question presupposes that many Kenyans have no or only vague ideas of contemporary design and do not realize that they are 'doing design' themselves. Of course, even those who do not know that design exists are brainwashed enough to prefer acting 'modern.' If acting 'modern' fails to do the trick, the educated few would rather pretend that they know design, to show that they are educated and have little connection with Kenya's past. In general, local communities do not know that they have DESIGN in their cultures and have bought into the colonial idea that good can only come from the outside.

International agencies and bilateral aid organizations take a keen interest in development throughout Africa. They report back to their boards of directors and/or national legislatures and must prove their worth on the ground to their taxpayers/donors. All too frequently, they have to tailor their activities to fit the aspirations and understandings of their ill-informed law makers and donors. These agencies appear to be dominated by lawyers, doctors, economists and engineers but rarely if ever designers. Often, they do not imagine or believe that design has a role to play in

Development or they may believe themselves to be competent in design because of their technical training and imagination. Often the percentage of money allocated to a project or is very small at the end point because of bloated foreign personnel structures and expensive equipment with no budget space for designers.

The authors have seen and/or participated in several projects that suffered from good intentions unsupported by good design. In one massive project covering 9 districts of Rift Valley and Eastern Provinces in the early 1990s, a European bilateral aid organization funded a number of environmental health interventions. After several years they hired a Medical Economist, a Water Engineer and a Social Scientist to do an evaluation. One of the projects was the installation of Ventilated Improved Latrines without first checking local toilet habits. The result was that people walked around to the back of the latrines to relieve themselves because the 4-inch space between the floor and the bottom of the latrine door threatened privacy. Until today, we still see latrines with tall PVC pipes sticking out of their roofs in an effort to make the latrines look like VIPs. The European government agency also tried to remove all smoke from houses by encouraging local people to raise the level of their ceilings. This created additional burdens on women and the environment because more firewood was needed to keep families warm while losing the fumigative benefits of the smoke. In one community, the women asked the evaluation team to explain what actually constituted 'a good house. (Pido Shuftan and Mbugua 1994) The International Community seems to share colonial assumptions that their knowledge is superior and that they will bring the right 'fix' for local challenges that they can only assume to understand.

Before the establishment of technical universities in Kenya, tertiary academia suffered from the assumption that manual and cerebral work are mutually exclusive. You were either white collar or blue collar, you used your head OR your hands but not both. The designer was the brain and held higher status than the maker, who was only to follow instructions. These ludicrous assumptions have driven academic life and social ranking systems for several thousand years (Pido, 2018a; Pido, Khamala and Pido 2018c). The integration of formal knowledge transfer by people who have written qualifications with knowledge transferred through other means, notably hands on experience, has been anathema in Kenyan academia.   The contribution of Kenyan tertiary academia to the preservation and perpetuation of 'traditional' knowledge is both paltry and pitiful.   Academic arrogance has cut off tertiary level access to local knowledge and innovation thus severely limiting our understanding of how things work, can work or should work. Vast bodies of local knowledge have disappeared (Pido 2018b) because of academia's failure to engage with communities.

The authors know of no tertiary institution that actually strives to outreach into communities whether through design research or training off campus. One such project in the early 2000s was driven by a foreign development NGO and carried out halfheartedly by the leading design education institution at the time.   There has been complete failure in University of Nairobi and later design education institutions to promote the Design Profession to Government as a whole, to specific ministries, to parliament and more recently to County and Regional governments.

Given that design education has been a part of formal education in Kenya, for over 50 years, we can note proudly that Kenya now boasts over thirty public universities and colleges at least 4 of which offer degree courses in Design.

Dynamics of Design and Engagement with Other Stakeholders

The bottom line of the engagement in design calculus is that all stakeholders have failed to connect with the idea of design (Margolin 1995) and with one another. Like concepts of development, 'community engagement' has not found a specific place for a number of reasons. Complacency in dealing with colonial governments and international agencies has been cited above. Educational and occupational compartmentalization and ranking have also been major contributors. Educational systems that dwell on myopic categories of acceptable knowledge and skills have contributed to occupational ranking and exclusion of creative talent from the resource pool. The system by which the literate and 'educated' are ranked higher than the illiterate and uneducated has served to exclude indigenous knowledge and those who carry and use it.

Early in the 20th century, the few who gained literacy were placed and placed themselves over and above the ones who did not participate in schooling. School teachers and government servants at least as late as the 1960s saw themselves as too good to do manual labor and socially better than those who did it. At some point, blaming colonialism, foreign religious groups, foreign governments and the like wears out, and Kenyans have to look at themselves to answer questions of lack of stakeholder engagement

in design. Who can be held responsible for complacency, snobbery, disdain of the less fortunate if not Kenyans themselves?

My conclusion is that, while all stakeholders have created the disconnects from design as a concept and a field of work, academia has to bear the greatest responsibility for failing to make an effort to sensitize other sectors due to its 'ivory tower' mentality. With the elevation in 2013 of the Kenya Polytechnic University College to university status as The Technical University of Kenya, we see a future of integrated knowledge transfer, research and innovation that will include Kenyans and foreigners from all walks of life and all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds in 'Design for the Real World.' (Papanek 1984)

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