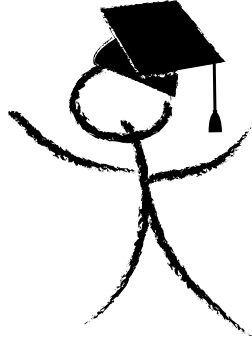


Helping Youth Through Educational Scholarships

# HYTES



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### Founding Members:

Directors:

- Harold Pliszka, B.H.Ecol.
- Pam Amulaku, B.S.W., M.S.S.
- Scott Muzychka, B.Comm., CA

Volunteers:

- Janet Pliszka, B.Comm.
- Jacqueline Ford, B.A., B.Ed.
- Eric Amulaku

### You can contact us at:

HYTES  
4676 Quentin Street SW  
Calgary, Alberta T2T 6E1  
CANADA

Tel: (403) 291-9812  
Toll Free: (877) 250-6300

### Corporate Update

HYTES is officially incorporated with the Government of Canada as a not for profit entity.

HYTES is now registered as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency. Our charitable business registration number is 828039545RR0001 and our effective date of registration is July 19, 2005.

We held our inaugural fundraiser on August 6 and since raised slightly over \$3200.00 through membership drive, silent auction and ongoing donations.

We currently have 28 members.

### Mission Statement

To help youth in developing nations to better themselves, their families and their communities by providing educational scholarships for secondary education.

### Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in any of the following opportunities Please contact us at [volunteer@hytes.org](mailto:volunteer@hytes.org):

1. Three volunteers to form a committee to develop an education package to fit within the Alberta Public School Curriculum.
2. Three volunteers to form a committee to plan and implement our next fundraiser.

### Holiday Gift Donations

Have someone on your gift list that already has everything? Take gift-giving to new HYTES and make a donation in his or her name. Click the "donate" button at [www.hytes.org](http://www.hytes.org) for more information. Your gift donation will go towards providing a student with a one-year scholarship at a secondary school in Kenya or Tanzania. Tax receipts will be issued to all donations greater than or equal to \$10.00.

### Student Scholarships

We have applications for scholarships from students in Nairobi attending Uthiru Girls School and Dagoretti 4 Kids and plan to pay school fees for at least two students in January 2006 (the beginning of their school year). We plan to contact several Tanzanian students very soon.



Pamela Amulaku with students from Uthiru Girls School in Nairobi.

Visit us online at [www.hytes.org](http://www.hytes.org).

You will soon be able to donate online using [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org).

## The State Of Schooling In Kenya

by Pam and Eric Amulaku

“Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world.”

-Nelson Mandela

**S**peaking of Christmas elections (which at the time of writing this article, most Canadians were), it was in the final days of 2002 that a new ‘Rainbow Coalition’ government was elected in Kenya, firmly ousting the former President Daniel arap Moi and his KANU party from their borderline autocratic 24-year reign. Moi’s successor Mwai Kibaki was voted in on the strength of two main campaign pledges: delivering Kenyans a new constitution within 100 days; and instituting free primary education, effective immediately upon election.

The first of these promises turned out to be quite empty. Only now, approximately 700 days after taking up office and at a time when Kenyan multiparty politics are messier than ever, is the Kibaki administering staging a national referendum on constitutional reform.

However, the latter undertaking of free primary education was in fact delivered, just as Kibaki had promised. Within days of being elected, at the start of the Kenyan school year in January 2003, primary enrolment shot up by well over a million pupils, as students flooded the gates of schools across the country. Drop out rates fell to an all-time low in subsequent months. The newcomers included significant numbers of children who had lost one or both parents to AIDS, along with older people who had never had the opportunity to go to school before. Case in point: great-grandfather and veteran of the pre-independence Mau Mau rebellions, Mr. Kimani Nganga Maruge of Eldoret, Kenya, who broke a Guinness world record for starting school at the

tender age of 84!

Understandably, the sudden changes in the education system in Kenya were not without their ‘growing pains.’ Infrastructure and capacity to handle the influx was not in place, and teacher-student ratios swelled to reported figures of 1:80 or even 1:90 in some areas of the country. Some instructors had to move their lessons outdoors, and dozens of students were forced to share the few textbooks and other supplies that were available. Challenges around the quality of education ensued, and are gradually being addressed by the Government of Kenya, its bilateral partners, and other agencies including UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank. Still, ‘hidden’ registration fees, purchase of compulsory uniforms, books, etc. have also raised questions around the legitimacy and possible misnomer of ‘free’ primary education... free but at what cost? An estimated 1.7 million primary school-aged children have yet to be accommodated into the system.

Perhaps the most critical ramification of the enrolment surge revolves around what happens next after primary education. According to Nairobi journalist Joyce Mulama:

Kenyan officials are discovering now that in addressing one educational need they have created another... it is rapidly becoming clear that the policy on basic schooling will have to be matched by similar initiatives concerning secondary education if the nation does not want to be confronted with an even bigger number of children who drop out after primary school (from ‘Time Now for Universal Secondary Schooling?’ from the InterPress Service News Agency, January 14, 2005).

As in Canada, job markets in Kenya demand a minimum of secondary education for virtually all types of professional and service industry employment. Without a KCSE (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education), career choices are limited to manual labour, agricul-

ture and small-scale market selling (known more commonly as ‘hawking’) – although important trades, ones that rarely provide a ‘living wage’ in contemporary Kenyan society.

Yet attending secondary school in Kenya remains a privilege that currently only about 30% of the eligible youth population can access (that figure according to 2003 UN statistics), due in part to insufficient and dilapidated secondary school infrastructure but more so to the exorbitantly high fees charged by local school boards that serve to lock poorer students out. According to recent research conducted by the HYTES team, the cost of attending secondary school for one year can reach approximately \$1300 Cdn. once registration, exam fees, cost of uniforms/supplies, boarding and tuition are amassed. Secondary education has, in effect, become a business venture in Kenya, with headmasters and selected teachers or board members at the receiving end of profits. The Government of Kenya maintains that improving the secondary school system is an uphill battle but nonetheless an ‘immediate priority,’ and is currently looking into proposals that would enforce a more reasonable national fee structure and also experimenting with the promotion of ‘day school’ rather than the more expensive ‘boarding school’ options.

For the moment however, completing secondary school (comprising Forms 1-4, the equivalent of Grades 9, 10, 11 & 12 in Canada) remains desperately out of reach for the majority of young people in Kenya. HYTES hopes to narrow this gap for as many aspiring secondary-aged Kenyan students as possible, initially through raising awareness and funds around the educational needs in Kenya and other developing countries. In the coming months we plan to offer full and partial secondary school scholarships to make positive long-term impacts in the lives of community-minded and financially

disadvantaged students in Kenya and beyond. Please check out our sponsored student profiles and progress reports in future HYTES newsletters, and help HYTES send more young people to school in Kenya!

*Pam has extensive volunteer experience in developing countries and lived in Kenya for three years where she met her Kenya-born husband, Eric. Eric has 23 years experience with the Kenyan education system.*

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## The East African Spirit

by Amy Brathwaite

**W**hen the time came to leave Tanzania and the place I'd nestled into for a short while, the thought of saying goodbye to these beautiful students made my heart beat rapidly and my stomach churn. I waited outside the office of Headmistress Mabula, as I'd done for the past few months. I watched the sun beams etch across the leafy courtyard, listened as the Jangwani girls recited their math lessons in the classroom across the hall, and waved at the woman who diligently swept the steps each day. Mrs. Mabula, the strong, confident women, who emulated dominance yet gentleness simultaneously, invited me to sit at her desk. She looked at me over top of her tinted, large frames and smiled at me with the warmth and openness of the Tanzanian sun. "I have come to say asante and kwaheri, Mrs. Mabula", and I felt the lump in my throat almost immediately. I handed her the card I'd written, and began to say, in a voice suddenly 10 times higher than normal, that I would never forget the kindness I had encountered in her school.

The Jangwani girls were the first to steal my heart when I arrived in Dar es Salaam. This government school, with basic facilities – requiring the girls to

carry their chairs with them from class to class because there weren't enough – created, from what I could observe, an environment where girls were encouraged to participate, speak freely and be involved in their school and their community. The open hallways were filled with the laughter, the singing and the chatter of all the girls, and the noise which echoed around the barren walls seemed to brighten the place with each passing giggle.

Every visit to the school gave me a new friend; every time I sat on the bench and waited to speak to the headmistress, I would be greeted with pleasantries, questions or elaborate handshakes. After that final goodbye with Mrs. Mabula, I sat down again on the hard wooden bench, just to gather my thoughts before setting off. I heard the familiar voice of Grace call out, "Mambo vipi, Amy!" I looked up to see all the girls from the HIV/AIDS Awareness club, the girls who'd brought creativity, dancing and perspective into our meetings, surround me in the familiar greetings of old friends. My eyes welled with tears as I knew it was time to say goodbye once more. They took their places around me on the bench, both of my hands held by different girls, and began to sing to me. The song started slowly, the harmonization increasing with each note, and I felt the same sense of happiness and ache in my heart as that first meeting, so many months earlier. I saw their faces through watery eyes, and gently got up to say goodbye.

One of the last girls waiting in the hall was a girl named Shaida. Her unassuming trust in people, her genuine curiosity and her simplicity often lead her to be teased by her classmates, although this never seemed to impede her spirit. She gracefully took my hand into both of hers, looked at me with her huge brown eyes and said, "Amy, I have nothing to give you but blessings." And with that, she walked away.

*Amy lived in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania for five months promoting HIV/AIDS education as a volunteer. She is currently working for the United Nations Development Programme in Dhaka, Bangladesh.*

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**Book Review:**  
**Race Against Time**  
**Stephen Lewis. Published**  
**October 2005 by Anansi**  
**Press.**

by Pam Amulaku

**I**n his new book entitled Race Against Time, 2003's Canadian of the Year (as named by Maclean's magazine) Stephen Lewis speaks out jadedly but vehemently against international development disgraces perpetuated by United States administrations past and present, the International Financial Institutions (including the World Bank and IMF along with the African Development Bank and other regional financial bodies), all G8 leaders, 'Live 8' organizer Bob Geldof and his entourage of rock stars, the United Nations (his employer of over twenty years), and the wider 'international community.' Lewis' basic premise throughout the course of five separate but overlapping chapters (each chapter of the book is actually one of a series of Massey Lectures that were delivered in cities across Canada and broadcast on CBC radio in October-November 2005) is that the overwhelming deficit between global humanitarian rhetoric and meaningful action on vital issues including education, health, status of women, and poverty - particularly in HIV/AIDS-stricken Sub-Saharan Africa – is inexcusable; "heartless indifference... criminal neglect" that indeed "shames and diminishes us all." Perhaps it is relevant to note that this year's World AIDS Day (December 1st) campaign centers around the theme of 'Keeping the Promise' - reviving by breathing tangible meaning into the mere words

comprising the UN's Declaration on its Commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS, a document written five years ago but yet to be fully enacted.

Lewis' general rage and more specific accusations of countless and morally repugnant inactions have stirred up hearsay that he could even be asked to vacate his position as the UN Secretary-General's special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, as reported recently by journalist Michael Valpy:

He himself alludes to that possibility in his book, speculating that some of the things he has said may lead high-level UN officials and politicians to 'exact retribution.' He has strongly criticized... a number of Western and African governments by name – the equivalent in UN bureaucratic etiquette to being flautulent at a garden party ('Mr. Lewis is on the Ropes' from The Globe and Mail, October 22, 2005).

An entire lecture/chapter of the Race Against Time series is devoted to the unrelenting and dire need for universal primary education (and for universal secondary education as well, although this is still a long way from being realized in most developing countries). Lewis contends while "there's probably no other international norm so fully, repeatedly and universally embraced" and laments how, despite of this, "free primary education, thus far at least, is all talk and endless negotiation. The commitments made are commitments dashed." He notes how, even in countries like Tanzania and Kenya where primary school fees were officially abolished in 2001 and 2003 respectively, 'hidden costs' for things such as uniforms, books, registration, examination fees, parent-teacher association memberships, and so forth can still thrust primary education out of reach for the children of many financially disadvantaged families. Then alluding to the particular mandate of HYTES, Lewis touches upon the 'dilemma' of secondary schools – where fees (and preposterously inflated fees,

at that) are typically still the order of the day in developing countries. Lewis makes no bones about the scandalous irony that prior to the 'cost-sharing' or 'cost-recovery' policies imposed by World Bank and IMF in the 1980s and '90s, most African nations had free primary and even secondary education strategies in place! In many instances, introducing 'user fees' for education (along with health care and other social services) was a condition of the infamous 'Structural Adjustment Programs' – in other words, poor African governments were driven to institute fees for public education as a prerequisite to receiving loans from the International Financial Institutions, or as a compulsory means of servicing existing debt to these same IFI's. Thus Lewis boldly suggests that the World Bank and IMF "have a debt of their own to pay back to Africa" and therefore should be the bodies responsible for funding the Millennium Development Goal aimed at universal primary education, akin to the payment of 'reparations' or 'restitution.' Otherwise, in Lewis' impassioned words,

Lost to the world will be hundreds of thousands of creative, gifted, often brilliant spirits... we're not talking about a privilege to be granted the deserving; we're talking about a fundamental human right that cannot be denied – not to children orphaned by AIDS and not to other vulnerable children, whose need for school is urgent, and whose wherewithal is negligible...

Many may know Lewis as a tremendously articulate and charismatic speaker who can bring a room full of listeners to laughter and to tears (Lewis delivered a particularly memorable and well-attended presentation as keynote speaker for the "G6B People's Summit" counter-conference to the Kananaskis G8 meeting in Calgary back in the summer of 2002), and he is the first to admit that his trademark fervor and expressive elocution "may not translate comfortably to the page." Yet

readers of Race Against Time should not be disappointed by any lack of fervent emotion or eloquence in Lewis' written 'voice' either. The 198-page soft-cover book sells for \$18.95 Cdn. and is available at your local bookstore or through [www.anansi.ca](http://www.anansi.ca). CBC Radio One broadcasts of Lewis' lecture series concluded on November 11, 2005.

*Pam is a director of HYTES and holds a Master's Degree in Social Sciences from Aalborg University, Denmark.*

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**Movie Review:  
The Constant Gardener  
(2005) Directed by  
Fernando Meirelles and  
based on the book by John  
le Carre**

by Amanda Moloney

**Y**ou know it's been a good movie when you talk about it all the way home in the car. My husband, Pat & I went to see The Constant Gardener last weekend and we discussed and debated all the way home, even with our sleeping, nearly two-year old in the back seat. The movie stars Ralph Fiennes and Rachel Weisz in a film that is equal parts documentary, love story and murder mystery.

Without giving away the good stuff, here is what the movie is about. Fiennes plays a low level British diplomat working contentedly (and rather obliviously) in Kenya until one day when he discovers that his wife, played by Weisz has been murdered. Not believing the love triangle murder motive the police are pushing, he sets out to find the truth himself. So many clues support the affair angle but his love for his dead wife keeps him searching, despite the many obstacles thrown in his path. He soon finds that his wife was secretly investigating a drug trial that was apparently killing poor, desperate Africans suffer-

ing from Tuberculosis. He finds that her quest for justice has led to her early demise. I'd love to tell you more but that would give it away.

So on to the post-movie discussion. While this murder/love story could have happened anywhere, the backdrop of beautiful Kenya provides a forum for exposing not only the criminals but also the many problems in Africa. I should acknowledge that I have never been to Africa (we'd love to and hopefully will soon) so I must assume that the situation as painted is fairly accurate.

The thing that struck me is that there appear to be so many different problems in Africa that are inextricably woven. Poverty, homelessness, lack of education, warring parties, international meddling and AIDS just to name a few. Pat & I both agreed that we'd love to help, but where does one even start? How do two people tackle such a massive problem?

The discussion made me think of a recent speech by Bill Clinton that I had the privilege to attend (at a swanky hotel, with ticket prices over \$100/person while people in Africa are starving . . . but let's not even get into the disparity just yet). Anyway, Mr. Clinton was quite impressive and left the audience with several simple suggestions on ways we can all make the world a better place. One of his messages was to do what you can to help no matter how small you feel or how little a difference you think you might make. He acknowledged that as a former President of the United States he does wield considerable influence but that we should never underestimate the efforts of one committed, determined person.

And that got me to thinking about Janet & Harold and their undertaking with HYTES. Janet tells me that they have raised enough money to send at least two students to school next year. Some might say "only two students, why

bother with all the effort it takes given the millions of Africans in need?" But they are bothering with the effort and their commitment will surely make a huge difference in the lives of many Kenyans and Tanzanians. And maybe the next year they can send three students to school and so on and so on. So kudos to the Pliszkas and the other HYTES volunteers who are doing something great. It is inspiring.

Anyway, this was meant to be a movie review, not a political manifesto or motivational speech on reasons to volunteer, so let me finish with a few final comments on the film. The beautiful scenery, a captivating picture of Africa, a fabulous romance and a well-woven conspiracy make this worth the \$13. Pat's only complaint was that he didn't necessarily buy the whole conspiracy theory thing. But it's my review now isn't it? Go see it and may you enjoy long conversations on the ride home!

*Amanda became a member of HYTES in August 2005 and works for the company that runs the AIR MILES program.*

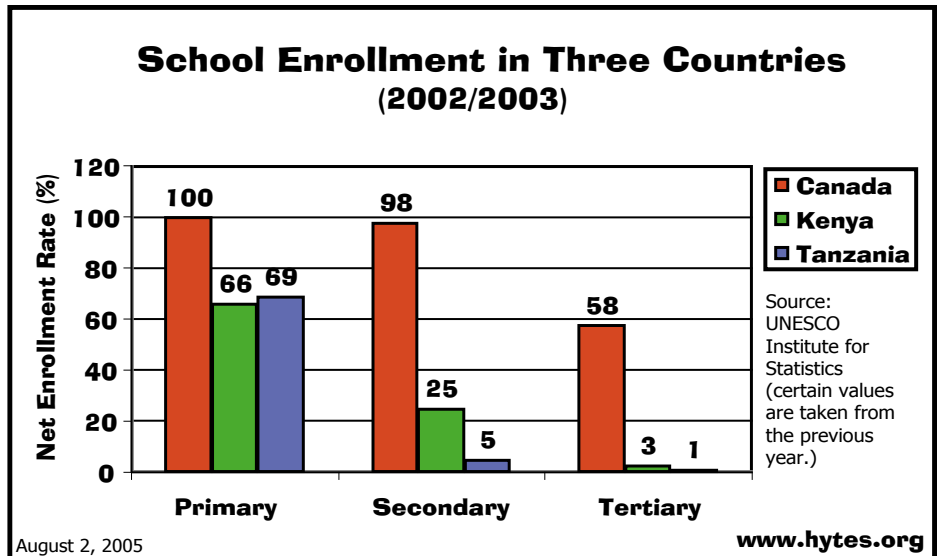
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## Enrollment Statistics for Canada, Kenya and Tanzania

by Harold Pliszka

One hundred per cent of Canadians of primary school age went to primary school in 2002/2003, 98% to secondary (high school) and 58% to tertiary (post-secondary). This is in sharp contrast to Kenya and Tanzania where 66% and 69% (respectively) went to primary school, 25% and 5% went to secondary, and 3% and 1% went to tertiary. The largest barriers to obtaining an education in Kenya and Tanzania are availability and affordability. (data taken from UNESCO Institute for Statistics - where certain data was missing, we used data from the previous year).

Kenya and Tanzania started providing free primary schooling in 2003 while fees for secondary schooling are still very high in comparison to family income. You will notice a large drop from primary (grade 8 and lower) to secondary (grade 9 and up) enroll-



*Harold is a founding director of HYTES. He also works as a graphic/web designer and project manager with Iron Lava Corp.*

ment. HYTES is currently focusing on scholarships for secondary schooling and may move into helping tertiary (post-secondary) students in the next five years.