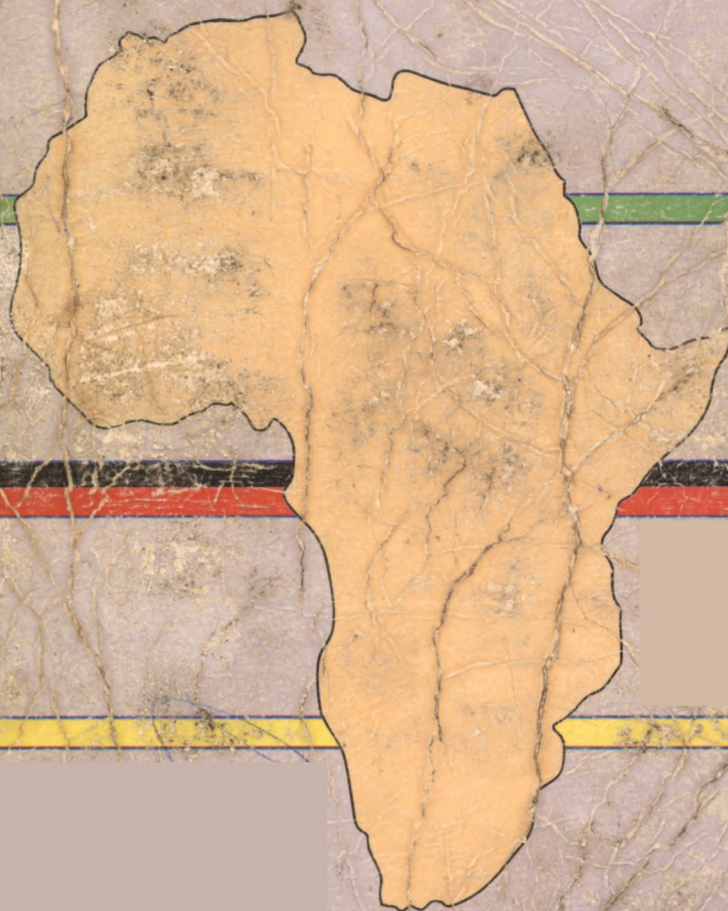


**The Human Factor
Approach to Development
in Africa**



Edited by

Chibwe G. Chivaura

and

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ISBN 0-908307-74-8

First published in 1998 by
University of Zimbabwe Publications
P. O. Box MP 203
Mount Pleasant
Harare
Zimbabwe

Typeset by the University of Zimbabwe Publications
Printed by Mazongororo Paper Converters

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UNIVERSITY OF
ZIMBABWE
Publications

Acknowledgements

The editors wish to thank the following many organizations, individuals and scholars for making the publication of this book possible:

The International Institute for Human Factor Development as the umbrella body of the Human Factor Research agenda for the support given in hosting the 1996 Harare conference which gave rise to the chapters contained in this book. The inspiration we got from Professor Senyo Adjibolosoo, the Director and founder of the Institute, was tremendous. He followed closely the editorial process of the book and gave useful advice.

Lonrho Africa, through the participation and involvement of its Deputy Chairman, Mr M.C. Mhembere, supported the conference and the publication of the book. Delta Corporation, through the involvement of Mr. J.S. Mutizwa, Chief Executive: Beverages Division and Mr P.C. Mhandu, Organization Development Manager.

Mr M. Bimha, the then Personnel Director, Tanganda, now Human Resources Director, National Foods, for his participation in the conference and the process of publishing the book. Mr P. Kunaka, Training Manager, ZUPCO, for his participation in the conference. Dr B. Benjamin, SPLA representative in Southern Africa for his participation in the conference and continued interest in the Human Factor Agenda.

The Faculty of Social Studies and the Department of Sociology for hosting the conference and providing useful secretarial services during the conference.

We wish to thank the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript for their useful suggestions towards the editing of the manuscript. Our sincere thanks go to those individuals too many to mention by name for attending the conference and participating in the discussions. Their input helped us to produce this book.

The University of Zimbabwe Publications deserves special mention, particularly Mr M.S. Mtetwa, Director of Publications, for his professional handling of the editing process of the book.

Human Factor Development: Agenda for the Future

Vimbai G. Chivaura

Human Factor approach

The central concern in this book is development. At the heart of that development are Africans. These are the Human Factor (HF). They are the ones who should be developed. They are the ones who should bring about that development, their own development. That is to say, they are the ones who develop themselves.

The HF development agenda for Africa is, therefore, human-centred. It must improve human beings. It must bring human welfare. In our case as the focus of this book, it must develop and benefit Africans. It is, in this sense, Africa-centred. The title of the book, *The Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa*, implies as much.

The understanding that the HF approach to development must improve human welfare means that people need, among other things, food, clean water, adequate clothing, decent housing, access to efficient health care and efficient transportation. The HF approach understands that these things do not happen on their own but are produced. Development also means the production of goods to satisfy human needs. The goods produced include tools. Our people need technology to make their production effective. But they must first develop the capacity to produce that technology themselves and the appropriate skills and personnel to man it responsibly.

Thus, the HF development agenda has two sides to it. Both complement each other. They can, therefore, be collapsed together and expressed as one, thus: to develop the creative potential of our people so that they can rely on their own effort and initiative to develop themselves and their own economy. In this way, they become their own masters and their own prime movers. Most importantly, they become independent and fully responsible and accountable for the successes and failures of the development programmes and agendas they initiate or choose to follow.

HF objectives

The HF approach to development reverses the situation created by colonialism in developing countries where the colonizer was the creator and the colonized were consumers (Cesaire, 1959:55). The HF approach:

turn[s] the colonized consumer into a creator...[and] give[s] the historical initiative back to those whom the colonial regime has made it its mission to rob all such initiative (Ibid, 1959:55).

The human factor approach restores faith in our own people's strength to shape their own future (Ibid.:156).

The situation where Africans look up to Europe for development initiatives and programmes, ideas and agendas, takes away their urge to think, act and create for themselves and by themselves. It is a master and slave situation. The relationship exploits Africans and benefits Europeans. It dehumanizes Africans and improves Europeans. In sum, it negates the creative capabilities of Africans and denies them rights to determine their own future and the direction they want to develop towards it.

HF and lessons from history

The long history of Europe's relation to Africa illustrates the imbalance of benefits very well. For instance:

The coasts of North Africa and Southern Europe interacted intimately to produce the beginnings of modern European civilization. Later, and much less happily, Europe engaged Africa in the tragic misalliance of the slave trade and colonialism to lay the foundations of modern European and American industrialism and wealth (Achebe, 1989:22).

The relationship boosted Europe and developed America. Africa was 'underdeveloped' (Rodney, 1964). The West was the exploiter, and Africa the exploited. The relationship was a partisanship, not a partnership, for:

no definition of partnership can evade the notion of equality. And equality is the one thing which Europeans are conspicuously incapable of extending to others, especially Africans (Achebe, Ibid:23).

Malcolm X has described the one-sided gains in this relationship as follows:

One hundred million Africans ... uprooted from the African continent - where are they today?.... At the end of slavery you didn't have 25 million Africans in the Western Hemisphere. What happened to those 75 million? Their bodies are at the bottom of the ocean, or their blood and their bones have fertilized the soil of this country [America] (1970:28).

Malcolm should have added the sweat and brains which brought prosperity to the West.

On both continents of Africa and the Americas, colonized Africans and black slaves waged bitter struggles and wars of liberation to free themselves from their white masters. They made some gains and won important victories. Virtually all African countries on the continent today are self-ruling.

HF and foreign aid

But while the West withdrew its physical and overt domination, it put back even more deadly means of binding Africa to itself. It champions theories of development and concepts of social organization with itself as the centre of reference. Post-colonialism, the global village, multiculturalism and plural societies are examples.

The attendant problems and contradictions in these theories, such as ethnic identities, gender conflicts and class clashes of brother against brother, sister against sister, and all brothers and fathers against their sisters and mothers, are meant to frustrate the collective efforts of Africa towards her own development. They leave Africa with no choice but to turn to the West, first for weapons of war against each other and next, for conflict resolution in the event of an impasse.

Again, because it is impossible to engage in meaningful development where there is war, Africa will find herself turning to Europe again for food aid, technical assistance, education scholarships, development plans, government policies and research programmes and projects. These aid packages are not for development, but for mere survival. They do not, and cannot, achieve development. They are a continuation of the colonial set up where Africa is regarded as a consumer dependent on the West as producer of material goods, intellectual ideas and culture.

Lest we forget history and make the mistake of thinking that the West's continued interest in pursuing ties with Africa through aid in education and technical assistance are charity or indication of a change of heart in their plans to dominate and plunder Africa, the editorial comment in *The Herald* of 3 May, 1997, on the then prevailing Zairean situation, cautions Zaireans (now Congolese) to beware in the following way:

Mr Kabila will have to understand that the refugee situation fits into the grand plans of some powers. It gives them the leverage and an opportunity to keep themselves involved in the region's affairs.

One more thing he has to remember when he gratefully accepts corporate sponsorship, signs billion dollar mining deals with these companies and sit across the table from American envoy Bill Richardson, is that these are the people who put Marshall Mobutu in power in the first place and looked the other way so long as he served their purpose.

These are the same people, and institutions, that sent Mr Kabila's mentor, Patrice Lumumba, to his death. They will side with him only if there is something for themselves: political accommodation that must be translated into vast economic gains. Threaten that and someone else will suddenly find the same jets at his disposal (6).

Continued reliance of Africa on the West for peace plans and development packages creates the 'dependency syndrome' which contradicts the very notion of her independence and results in her neglect to develop her own HF. As Malcolm X says, 'When you are independent of someone, you can separate from them. If you can't separate from them it means you're not independent of them' (9).

The following relationship between Europe and Africa which Malcolm X suggests is the ideal. 'The only way we can be independent is to...wage the battle ourselves,' (58). 'Our communities must be the sources of their own strength politically, intellectually, and culturally' (49).

The HF approach to development does not, in any way, rule out the necessity of partnership with others in development.

The position it takes is that partnership or outside help should not compromise the independence of African people to decide and control the direction of development they want to take. If, for instance:

white people want to help, they can help . . . We accept their help. They can work . . . in the white community on white people and change their attitude toward us . . . So we don't question their sincerity, we don't question their integrity. We just encourage them to use it . . . to make the white community act better toward us . . . But they don't have to come . . . and . . . try and make themselves acceptable to us . . . [Let] them work in the white community (Malcolm X: 58).

The position of the HF development approach to donations from the West is that these are not out of kindness but chains which cost lives and progress. They work as follows: In order to continue to get further help from Europe or America, Africa must 'condemn' her own friends who happen to be 'enemies' of the West. She must stop condemning her own 'enemies' who happen to be friends of the West (Ibid.).

The kind of relationship with Europe ideal for Africa is the one Malcolm X has suggested in the preceding quote above. It is the only way to guarantee the independence rights of both parties. It leaves each party free to plan its own development path the way it sees fit and to choose its own friends itself and decide who its enemies are. Intimidation and domination of one party by the other is out of the question.

HF and self-rule

Developing Africa's own HF is, clearly, a high priority in safeguarding Africa's independence and self-rule. It disengages Africa from the self-denigrating dependency syndrome responsible for so much of her HF decay and development failures.

Malcolm X, indeed, echoed the agenda of the HF development approach when he said that When the blackman so awakens, and becomes intellectually mature and instilled with the racial dignity, incentive and confidence to stand on his own feet, and think and do for himself what others are doing for themselves, only then will he become truly independent, free and recognized as a human being on the basis of equality with all other human beings (Ibid:48) Malcolm X is also within the HF development vision when he says:

an outsider can't clean up your house as well as you can. An outsider can't take care of your children as well as you can. An outsider can't look after your needs as well as you can. And an outsider can't understand your problems as well as you can (48).

That spirit of none but ourselves are our own liberators is the theme that each chapter in this book addresses, each in its own way and from each writer's own perspective. As the title of the book suggests, no meaningful approach to development can afford to ignore the participation of the very people or HF it purports to benefit. European development plans have their own people as the center of their concern, so do American programmes and Asian agendas. Their own HF are the bases of their development visions. In adopting the HF approach to development, Africa is simply doing what others are already doing.

Book scope and HF overview

The chapters in *The Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa* are the result of papers presented at the Second International Conference on Human Factor Development held in 1996 at the University of Zimbabwe from 20 to 22 September. The conference organizers were the International Institute for Human Factor Development (IIHFD). They are based in Canada and are the publishers of the *Review of Human Factor Studies* (RHFS) whose scope and objectives complement the approach to development in this book. Readers may, therefore, find the following research information about the journal crucial to their understanding of the HF approach to development which we propose in this book. The objectives read as follows:

The Review of Human Factor Studies (RHFS) is an international multidisciplinary refereed journal whose objective is to create the forum for scholars to interact regarding the critical role of the human factor (HF) in development. As such, it welcomes articles from scholars of all disciplines and ideological persuasions.

The RHFS is primarily interested in research papers that discuss the role of the HF in the development of societies. As a multidisciplinary forum, all development related issues [are] considered: development education and/or administration, education, human resource development and management, technology transfer and/or development, and such like. Theoretical papers, empirical research, and case studies [are] also considered for publication as long as they focus on the role of the HF in development.

(RHFS Vol.II No.I June 1996: Objectives and Scope, Inside Front Cover.)

The scholars whose papers contribute to the chapters in *The Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa*, or were presented at the conference, and many others who attended the conference and participated in various capacities, were drawn from across various disciplines. These included social institutions, industry, business sectors, political organizations, government ministries, social groups, university students and individuals per se with genuine interest in African development and progress. There were scholars from Europe, United States and Canada. The majority came from Africa, especially Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, and Kenya.

The book is divided into five parts. *Part One* constitutes papers which explain the HF concept as the fundamental basis of meaningful approaches to development in any society. The role of education in imparting the appropriate skills and HF values to individuals to enable them to function effectively and responsibly in the development process, is given special emphasis. The section is, therefore, appropriately titled, The Human Factor Concept and Education.

Part Two focuses on 'Human Factor Development and Culture'. Culture is seen as the source of the values that go into the making of a people's character-content and world-outlook. It governs their overall behaviour and how they organize themselves as a society. It ensures that each individual participates fully, committedly, responsibly

and effectively in the social development process. This section also discusses the role of colonialism and the West in destroying African culture and institutions, and substituting them with theirs to promote their own programmes, agendas and interests. Each chapter concludes with suggestions on how Africa should reverse this situation and go about the business of constructing her own institutions and developing her own viable HF.

Part Three discusses 'Human Factor Development and Business Organizations'. Chapter Fifteen focuses on how to develop an appropriate HF to run business institutions, manage organizations and operate modern technology effectively. It also discusses the responsibility of business organizations to invest their profit gains in developing the societies in which they operate. Ways of utilizing Africa's natural resources and culture to develop Africa's economy are examined in this section. Finally, *Part Three* discusses the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes on the economic well-being of African societies and the extent to which these programmes as suggested by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are meant to develop or underdevelop African and Third World economies.

The title of *Part Four* is 'Human Factor and Leadership'. Two of the chapters in this section are contributed by cabinet ministers in the Zimbabwe government. They are, therefore, acquainted with the problems they discuss and responsibilities and challenges which people in positions of leadership face. Their contributions are, thus, crucial to the practical understanding of the human factor approach to development. They are written from the position of practitioners with first-hand experience, rather than mere research, theory or academicism.

John Nkomo was Minister of Local Government Rural and Urban Development at the time of the conference. He discusses the challenges his Ministry faces in trying to merge Western styles of leadership suitable for running western-type institutions found in urban areas, with African leadership styles based on African traditions and culture, and suitable for running African communities in rural areas.

Dumiso Dabengwa was then Minister of Home Affairs. The Home Affairs Ministry is charged with the responsibility of dealing with issues arising from HF decay in the generality of the African populace including the leadership itself. Corruption, crime, nepotism, tribalism and other various forms of HF decay on the increase in African societies are examples.

Chapter Eighteen by Uwakwe discusses how general HF decay in African societies brings about underdevelopment in their countries and their economies. He gives suggestions of how this decay could be surmounted.

The last section of the book, *Part Five*, discusses 'The Human Factor, Media and Politics'. Chapter Nineteen outlines the history of the media in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to demonstrate its partisan role in politics, culture, religion, race relations, economics and business interests. It dispels the myth that the media can be capable of ever being free and fair. All media are partisan, whether independent or government owned, because they identify with interests and HF development programmes of particular groups.

Chapter Twenty discusses HF conflict in Africa. The colonialist partition of Africa which gave rise to the formation of multiethnic nation states is seen as the main source. Another cause which results from it is the reliance of the African leadership on the support of their ethnic groups in their struggle for political power and economic control. Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia and West African states are cited as examples. The chapter exhorts African leaders to turn to African culture and traditions for principles and models of leadership.

The book ends on a bright and appropriate note on lessons of co-operation from African history. It shows that the approach we are talking about in *The Human Factor Approach to Development* in Africa is not new or a passing, momentary invention. It is a practical approach with practical challenges which call for practical solutions capable of achieving practical, tangible results. Witness Mangwende, the author of the chapter, writes as Minister of Youth, Sport and Culture. Like Ministers John Nkomo and Dumiso Dabengwa, he is thus, writing from the view-point of practical experience. The Ministry of Youth, Sport and culture is charged with the responsibility of the cultural education and upbringing of the African youths in Zimbabwe who come from different ethnic groups and must, therefore, find ways of coming together to forge a united front as the leadership of tomorrow. Lessons of co-operation from African history are, therefore, provided as models to emulate.

HF challenges and future agenda

Indeed, the need for co-operation and concerted effort in resolving conflict on the African continent and bringing about peace, progress and development is the overall message running throughout this book. Singled out for special focus are the roles of education, culture, the media, communication, languages, commerce, technology, business, race, religion, ethnicity, economics, gender, leadership and African intellectuals in development.

Historical precedents of inter-ethnic co-existence, interstate trade and commerce, and trans-regional co-operation discussed in the closing chapter serve as models for us to emulate. So are the examples of leadership and entrepreneurship discussed elsewhere in this book.

The primary cause of Africa's problems of development identified in this book is HF decay. This is found in African people and their leaders. It is characterised by lack of belief and confidence in our own people's ability to come up with their own viable development agendas for Africa and to direct African affairs themselves without having to constantly consult their former colonial masters or dutiously resorting to their development theories. This kind of HF decay in African people is worsened by the absence of commitment and the spirit of patriotism, accountability and integrity in African people and their leaders towards African advancement. It explains the failure of African leaders to take control of the existing social, cultural, economic and political institutions they have inherited from colonialism after independence and transform their functions to serve the interests and welfare of African people. It also requires that these institutions are put in the hands of Africans who have acquired the appropriate 'HF values and are, therefore, able to run them responsibly.

Indeed, the future agenda of the HF approach to development is the setting up of a Human Factor Research Centre. Its objectives would be to carry out research on the role of the HF in development and set up HF education and training programmes with appropriate HF content for all social institutions and sectors, industry, and business organizations.

The content of HF development education will include imparting the spirit of patriotism, commitment, self-application and the realization that none but we ourselves as Africans must be the agents of the development we so much seek to bring about and the beneficiaries of the outcome and all the sacrifices we are prepared to put into it. That is the essence of the HF approach to development and of Africa's agenda for the future.

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