



Initiatives of Change

**HARAMBEE**  
Africa

News from Harambee 5  
Ethiopia

# DREAM of AFRICA

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## Down History Lane

You cannot know where you are going unless you know where you are coming from. It was on this note that Harambee fieldwork kicked off, starting with a visit to the National Museum of Ethiopia which unveiled the country's history that dates over 3000 years. Ethiopia is the oldest independent sovereign nation in Africa, has never been conquered or colonized, is renowned as the cradle of mankind, bore a civilization that flowed from its Nile to nourish Egypt and legend has it that it possesses the oldest religious icon, the Ark of the Covenant, at Axum

The next historical highlight was a visit to Shashamane and the Rastafarian community there. As history narrates, much of the African Diaspora was dispersed throughout Europe, Asia and the Americas during the Atlantic and Arab slave trade in the 9th C and was one of the largest migrations in Human History. Africa's loss of millions of her young, strong and brilliant sons and daughters arguably was and still is a major cause of her underdevelopment.

When Ethiopia's independence was threatened by Roman Italy, blacks in the Diaspora supported the Ethiopian cause through the Ethiopian World Federation established in 1937. Ethiopia claimed her liberation and upon the triumphant return of the Emperor Haile Selassie to the throne, he on behalf of the Ethiopian people, gave a grant

of 500 acres of land in Shashamane as a gift to blacks in the Diaspora for repatriation. From 1952, poor but determined blacks, especially from the Caribbean, have been arriving to resettle on this land.

One of these settlers said, 'We have one of the oldest surviving third generations of Africans who have resettled themselves by their sheer determination to dwell in the land of their ancestors. We appeal to the African Union to implement in principle an enshrined document, "the right of return" for whosoever desires.'

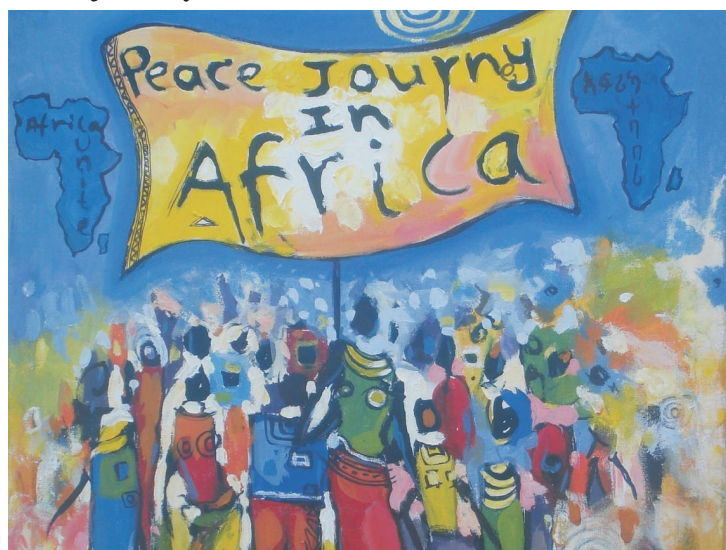


Here Harambee interacted with some of the first pioneers of Shashamane as well as others who have returned 'home' and felt challenged to see their strong need to reconnect with their roots, especially since today many Africans contemplate escaping Africa for the west. These settlers may have had a relatively comfortable life abroad, but even that

could not match their desire to return to their roots, to unite and help develop this community. Today they have transformed the once remote land into a relatively developed town through fundraising and mobilization of human resources that has led to the establishment, amongst other things, of schools, hotels, charitable foundations, training centres.

'We need the Diaspora to do all that is in their means to support our projects for health, agriculture, education and affordable housing. We also need assistance in development, networking, technologies, workshop visits, youth exchange programmes, sports and recreational assistance.', they urged.

### Peace Journey in Africa



Africa is not a failed continent. Africa is not a sweeping carpet of poverty. On the contrary, Africa is the richest continent in terms of her natural resources. So then why does she seem to be going off the deep end?

One of the issues that seems to stand out like a sore thumb is 'mindset' which has also been described as 'enslavement of the mind' and bears symptoms such as dependency. But Africa's achievements of old such as the pyramids of Egypt, Ethiopia's Lalibela and Axum, state a fact for sure; that in her DNA is the ingredient to do it for herself and shine. On 11 November, the Harambee participants, then in their second week of field work, met a group of young Africans who have dared to re-imagine their continent and take action.

'Peace Journey in Africa' encompasses 24 youth from 24 African countries. In January 2010, when the heads of state & Government convene in Addis Ababa to launch the 'African Peace Year', Peace Journey in Africa will also be flagged off from the African Union Hall to begin a six month campaign across 24 African States. The Campaign is dubbed 'Stop Civil War at Mama Africa' and aims at addressing the bad effects of African civil wars that have devastated the continent for almost the entire period of post colonialism.

A road journey will also symbolize breaking of borders and divides in the continent while ensuring that the participants see their countries for what they really are. On this trail, they will engage their audiences through panel discussions, performing and visual arts, workshops, and documentary films.

'Africa is the first to contribute everything to the world, we were the first to contribute in the world civilization and then we were disrupted by slave trade and colonization and now we live in identity crisis, brain drain, cultural dependency, economic dependency and civil war,' said the Peace Journey President Hiwot Adane

This, hopefully, will be the onus for Africans to quit the 'head-in-the-sand' attitude and take personal responsibility. Also, hopefully, the message that Africans must quit being here physically yet away in the greener pastures of the west mentally, will bounce off to 'Peace Journey' audiences and return in applause.

It is time for Africans to use their human and material resources. We still do not trust each other. We still compete with each other while protecting "recipes for success and development" from each other in the vow to shine individually. In the fight for independence our forefathers had to unite in order to claim victory. Today we fight each other. Let us go back to the past and learn from them, quit civil war and work to instead build our nations in the true spirit of Pan Africanism.

Anne Njeri (Kenya); why fight each other? If my friend fails, I have failed. If Uganda fails, Kenya has failed. We are interconnected so we cannot afford to be selfish. Our motives need to be right and selfless; otherwise even Peace Journey and Harambee will fail.



### Participants

Nicholas Onosigho (Nigeria), Tongo James (Sudan), Eldoma Dawood Abdalla (Sudan), James Wamboga (Uganda), Mazuba Haanyama (South Africa), Mbindyo Kimanthi (Kenya), Shaneeza Naszeer (Canada), Waratwa Moroka (South Africa), Ndoni Khanyile (South Africa), Mediatrix Masava (Kenya), Tegegnetwork Emishaw (Ethiopia), Fitsum Assefa (Ethiopia), Yonas Dimissie (Ethiopia), Kebebew Ebsa (Ethiopia), Getesh Glmasker (Ethiopia), Zaid Hagos (Ethiopia), Warkalem G/hiwet